

Afghan rebels report killing 53 troops

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (Agencies) — Afghan rebels said Monday that their forces killed 53 government troops and shot down five aircraft in weekend fighting around Afghanistan's strategic eastern city of Jalalabad. A commander of the Mujahideen rebels near Kabul also said some 600 Indian military advisers including 60 pilots were quartered in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif and that they had taken part in bombing missions against Mujahideen. The Afghan News Agency, associated with hardline rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, said the Mujahideen captured several posts north of Jalalabad in heavy fighting since Saturday. Afghan government jets bombed a mosque near the eastern city of Jalalabad this weekend, slightly injuring Hekmatyar, the foreign minister of an Afghan rebel government-in-exile. A spokesman for Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-i-Islami Party told Reuters Sunday the foreign minister had one hand slightly injured in Saturday's attack. Meanwhile the Kabul government reported a halt in ground fighting around the besieged city of Jalalabad Monday and said the Mujahideen appeared to be giving up hope of victory.

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Mahdi calls on SPLA to talk peace

KHARTOUM (R) — Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi, describing rebel leader John Garang as a brother, urged him Monday to respond to government moves to end the five-year-old civil war in south Sudan. Mahdi, speaking in parliament two days after his new coalition was sworn in, said he planned to suspend harsh Islamic Sharia punishments (haddood), one of the key demands of southern rebels. He said Sharia would be discussed by a proposed national constitutional conference in which Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) would take part. "I direct an appeal to brother John Garang to respond to the peace operations room which the cabinet set up on the basis of the Nov. 16 agreement," the prime minister said, referring to a peace pact negotiated last year. "I hope to hear from him a positive response that will bring peace to the country," he said. Garang signed the accord with Mohammed Osman Al Niryghal, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the main coalition partner with Mahdi's Umma Party.

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Al Hussein decorates Moroccan parliament speaker

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court Monday Mr. Ahmad Asaman, speaker of the Moroccan parliament, and his accompanying delegation.

During the audience the King decorated Asaman with the Jordanian Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order.

The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi and the Moroccan Ambassador to Jordan Abdul Latif Laraki.

Also Monday, Asaman was received by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai in the presence of Mr. Lawzi and the Moroccan ambassador to Jordan.

Asaman had a meeting here Monday with Lawzi to discuss Jordanian-Moroccan cooperation in parliamentary affairs, current Arab issues and the Palestine problem.

Asaman described the formation of the Maghreb Union and the Arab Cooperation Council as two important steps on the way to bolster solidarity among Arab states.

He said that the two economic groupings have left the door open for other countries to join and to take part in the process of bolstering inter-Arab economic cooperation.

For his part, Lawzi said that the two groupings open a new era



His Majesty King Hussein Monday presents the Jordanian Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to Speaker of the Moroccan Parliament Ahmad Asaman at the Royal Court (Petra photo).

in the history of the Arab nation as they pave the ground for further coordination of efforts to strengthen the Arab World in all fields.

Referring to the Palestine question, Lawzi said the Palestinians and Jordanians are linked in a strong unity despite the severing of legal ties between Jordan and the West Bank.

"Jordan took this step to enhance the identity of the Palestinian people and their legitimate representative in the struggle to regain the Arab land of Palestine," Lawzi noted.

Lawzi also briefed the Moroccan guest and his accompanying

delegation on Jordan's parliamentary life since independence. A number of the Upper House members Monday accompanied Asaman and his delegation on a visit to the archaeological city of Jerash, where they heard a briefing on its historical background.

Asaman also visited the tombs of the late King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein, founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and his son the late King Talal, where he laid wreaths and recited verses of the Holy Koran.

Asaman arrived here Sunday evening on a several day visit to Jordan.

ACC states agree to open airspace

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The four countries of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) have agreed to open their airspace for each other and to consider air travel between them as part of domestic flights, taking place within the same country.

The announcement was made by Royal Jordanian Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ali Ghandour upon returning here from a meeting in Cairo with heads of civil aviation authorities and national airlines of Egypt, North Yemen and Iraq, the other three ACC partners.

Ghandour said that the four countries also agreed to maintain close coordination among their respective airlines, especially in air fares, with a view to encouraging citizens from the four countries to travel by air via the respective airlines.

The meeting took measures to promote and increase air traffic between the four ACC countries, he said.

According to Ghandour, the four parties to the meeting discussed unifying the types of their aircraft to pave the way for training their pilots and maintenance engineers, which in turn would reduce the cost of maintaining the aircraft.

The meeting discussed ways to operate joint flights on long-distance routes, such as Australia, North and South America and the Far East, to cut down on cost, and to introduce measures facilitating air travel among the capitals of the four countries on any of the national airlines, Ghandour noted.

He said further meetings will be held through sub-committees in a week's time to formulate ideas that can be adopted in this respect. Reports on the findings will be referred to the ACC summit meeting, Ghandour added.

Jordan, IMF start formal talks today

AMMAN (R) — Jordan is set to ask the IMF for a standby credit and help with debt rescheduling when formal talks open Tuesday.

Prime Minister Zaid Rifai says the Kingdom has already moved to reform its economy and will resist any attempt by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to impose conditions.

The government has taken all the corrective measures needed to restructure the Jordanian economy," he said last week.

Finance Minister Hanna Odeh will lead the Jordanian side in Tuesday's talks, which follow 10 days of preparatory work by an advance IMF team. No details of the fund's views have emerged.

Rifai said Jordan has seeking an accord within two weeks on rescheduling the debt, which has put at \$6 billion.

Central Bank Deputy Governor Maher Shukri has estimated debt servicing at about \$1.2 billion this year.

Shukri has said Jordan will ask the IMF for a standby credit.

Bankers say Amman needs the IMF's blessing for its economic programme before it can approach the Paris Club of major Western creditor nations to reschedule their share of the debt.

Spurred by a critical shortage of foreign currency, the government has already taken action often recommended by the IMF. It has devalued the dinar, curbed imports and cut spending.

However, to cushion the impact of austerity, it has pledged to hold basic food prices stable this year with subsidies expected to cost about JD 60 million (\$11 million).

Rifai has blamed the cash crunch on Arab oil states for failing to pay in full an annual grant of \$1.25 billion promised to Jordan as a frontline state against Israel in 1978.



An Israeli plainclothes policeman pulls a Palestinian girl by handcuffs in occupied Jerusalem. The Israeli policemen have been posing as journalists to approach protesters and arrest them.

Underground leaders ban talks with Israeli officials

Israeli police kill 4-year-old Palestinian boy during strike

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — An Israeli policeman shot dead a four-year-old Palestinian boy Monday during a general strike in the occupied West Bank, police sources said.

Doctors said Amjad Mustafa Nasser was shot in the chest in Beit Kad village near Jenin and was dead on arriving at the hospital. He was the second youngest Palestinian child killed during the 15-month uprising against Israeli occupation.

The sources said there were protests in the village and the army and police were investigating the circumstances. The identity of the policeman was not disclosed.

Underground leaders of the uprising, meanwhile, banned meetings between Palestinians and Israeli officials because of a growing concern that the talks could help Israel's attempts to bypass the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

A day-long general strike paralysed the occupied territories, where shops were closed and public transport halted.

The army said it was checking a report that troops shot and wounded a Palestinian freelance journalist working with a Norwegian television crew in the Gaza Strip's Sha'ti Refugee Camp, then under curfew.

Hassan Jibril, 26, told Reuters that he showed the soldiers a press card from an Arab news agency, but they dragged him into an alley, beat him severely with clubs and shot him in the back when he tried to escape.

Soldiers raided Askar Refugee Camp near Nablus in the West Bank and shot and wounded four Palestinians when they were confronted by protesters, an army spokeswoman said.

The ban on contacts with Israeli occupation authorities was announced in a leaflet which appeared in East Jerusalem and was signed by the Unified National Leadership of the uprising.

"In the face of the bad impressions that such meetings give, in light of the glare of publicity and damage that it does to the uprising, the Unified National Leadership... asserts the importance of ending participation in such meetings," it said.

Pro-PLO leaders like Faisal Al Hussein, Hanna Siniora and Sari Nusseibeh have held talks with dovish Israeli government politicians in occupied Jerusalem, Europe and the United States, while dozens of local leaders have met Israeli military administrators in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Nusseibeh said he believed there was general agreement on suspending talks at least until

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir visited the United States next week.

"There is a wariness on the part of Palestinians, the feeling that these meetings should not be exploited by Israeli officials to look as if they substitute negotiations between the PLO and Israel," he said.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said this month during a visit by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens to Washington that Israel might eventually have to talk to the PLO.

His remark signalled a shift in U.S. support for Israel's policy of emphasising local leaders. Shamir rejects any talks with the PLO and has told the United States that Israel will accept only local Palestinian representatives.

Nusseibeh denied a report in Al Hamishmar newspaper saying that he and other prominent Palestinians met Shamir recently and threatened to sue the paper unless it retracted the story.

King Fahd cheered in Egypt after signing pact with Iraq

CAIRO (R) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia received a spectacular welcome in Cairo Monday on his arrival from Iraq, where he signed a non-aggression pact with President Saddam Hussein.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and other dignitaries greeted King Fahd on his first visit to Cairo as monarch in a ceremony broadcast live by Egyptian television.

Thousands of schoolchildren and dozens of posters welcomed the king at the airport and also lined the streets near Cairo's Kubba Palace, where the Saudi leader was due to stay during his three-day visit.

"Welcome to the meeting of brothers, welcome to prosperity and solidarity," declared one poster. "Egypt and Saudi Arabia, together forever," said another.

King Fahd earlier hailed the pact he signed in Iraq as "a gesture of goodwill and evidence of good intentions."

President Hussein said the two separate agreements followed "the concept of non-interference in the internal affairs of the two sisterly countries and non-use of force and armies between the two states."

Saudi Arabia was Iraq's strongest financial backer in its eight-year war against Iran, in which a ceasefire was declared last August.

The Saudi leader's Egypt visit, which includes tours of Suez and Alexandria, was seen by Cairo commentators as a symbolic end to an era in which Egypt was isolated from the Arabs because of its 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

Only Syria, Libya and Lebanon have failed to renew ties with Egypt.

"Everyday there is new evidence that we are living the best years of our Arabism... Welcome to a new great stage in the history of the Arab nation," gushed Mahmoud Abdul Moneim Murad, writing in Al Akhbar newspaper.

Despite Egypt's return to the Arab fold, a much-heralded Arab summit in Riyadh has yet to get off the ground, and some regional diplomats were sceptical that it would take place.

King Fahd has insisted on minimum cooperation between Syria and its rivals Iraq, Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) before convening a regular summit.

Inner-Arab tension was expected to be a main topic of talks between King Fahd and President Hosni Mubarak, who were due to review the fighting in Lebanon, the Arab-Israeli peace process, economic cooperation and summit prospects.

The PLO, anxious to get Arab backing for its peace initiatives, wants an extraordinary summit in Morocco if Saudi Arabia fails to gain a consensus.

"Chairman Arafat still thinks we ought to hold one soon, if not in Riyadh then in Morocco," said Nabil Shaath, a Cairo-based adviser to PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

Fahd is due to travel to Tunis after Cairo, according to Egyptian papers. His Egypt visit comes two days after a mini-summit in the Suez Canal town of Ismailia between Mubarak, Arafat and

His Majesty King Hussein.

Arafat briefed his two allies on the outcome of PLO talks with the U.S. ambassador to Tunis. The three leaders also reviewed a joint stand ahead of visits to the U.S. by Mubarak, King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Egyptian officials said King Fahd, who postponed the Egypt visit more than once, would be given special treatment during his stay. Mubarak was scheduled to accompany his royal guest on tours of Suez and Ismailia, and on a train ride to the Mediterranean port of Alexandria.

Egyptian officials hope the visit will promote further Saudi investment in Egypt, particularly in military industry.

Egypt has been negotiating with its former partners in the Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI) to reunite the group, which broke up after Egypt made peace with Israel.

Saudi Arabia has been wary of rejoining the AOI, formed in Egypt with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, due to changing economic conditions in the region, Egyptian officials said.

But Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz, answering journalists' questions Sunday, said King Fahd might discuss resuming joint military production.

Egypt is also anxious to get Saudi backing in its talks with Western creditors. Mubarak, struggling to reach a reform agreement with the International Monetary Fund, is expected to press for leniency during his trip to Washington next week.

Shamir reportedly to propose elections, autonomy in territories

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will propose holding elections in the occupied territories as part of an interim peace settlement that would also grant Palestinians limited self-rule, a senior government official said Monday.

The Haaretz daily said Shamir will discuss the idea in meetings with U.S. leaders in Washington next week that will likely focus on how to advance Middle East peace contacts despite Israel's refusal to speak to the PLO.

Other news reports quoting the Washington Post, said Shamir

may suggest sharing control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with neighbouring Jordan and to have Palestinians elect representatives to this "confederalist body."

Shamir's spokesman Avi Pazner refused direct comment on these reports. Reached by telephone, Pazner said the premier "will come to Washington with new ideas," and declined to elaborate.

Another senior official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press that Shamir and three top aides have drawn up a proposal for Palesti-

nians to elect either mayors or a local leadership in the near future. These representatives would work out an interim settlement or autonomy arrangement with Israel, the official said.

"The main idea is elections as part of an interim settlement, but the type and extent of the elections — whether they would be mayors, or local leaders, or representatives — will be left open to negotiation," the official said.

"The moment agreement is reached, we can start, they (the elections) could take place within a few months," the official added.

PLO sees progress in U.S. view of Palestine problem

TUNIS (R) — The United States showed cautious progress in its view of the Palestinian question during talks in Tunis last week, a PLO official said Monday.

Although U.S. Ambassador Robert Pelletreau could not give clear answers on most issues raised, the Palestinian team detected some movement towards its own point of view, the official told Reuters in a detailed briefing.

He said the United States hinted it was working for direct talks between the PLO and Israel, a step which U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has already said Israel might have to take if it cannot find negotiating partners outside the organisation.

"It was also clear that the Americans don't accept the division between Palestinians inside the occupied territories and those outside," the official added.

Israel, fearful of the demographic impact of returning refugees, has always sought to exclude the diaspora Palestinians from any settlement. The U.S.-sponsored Camp David accords of 1978 took the same approach.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the U.S. team came closer to the PLO line in drawing a distinction between terrorism and violent aspects of the 15-month-old intifada in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Shelling shakes Beirut as Arab League moves to halt fighting

BEIRUT (AP) — Rival gunners fought artillery and rocket battles in and around Beirut Monday as the Arab League moved to halt the worst round of civil war fighting in four years.

Police said the daylong sporadic artillery duels escalated before sundown when Syrian and mainly Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) gunners lobbed hundreds of rockets from multi-barrelled launchers into residential districts in east Beirut and the Falangist heartland northeast of the capital.

Dozens of rockets exploded at the Defence Ministry in suburban Yarz, headquarters of Army Commander Gen. Michel Aoun, and the presidential palace in nearby Baabda, where Aoun lives.

Police had no reports of casualties among soldiers. Artillery batteries of Aoun's predominantly Falangist units responded with 155-mm Howitzer barrages against Syrian and PSP positions in the central mountains above the capital, police reported.

They said one civilian was killed and three others wounded in east Beirut from the mid-afternoon shelling. That raised the overall toll to 98 dead and 342 injured since the latest round erupted March 8.

In Tunis, an Arab League mediation panel sent appeals for an immediate ceasefire to the Syrian government of President Hafez Al Assad as well as the Lebanese belligerents, Beirut radio stations said.

The six-man committee, headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad

Al Sabah, scheduled a series of meetings in the Tunisian capital with two Lebanese ex-presidents and four former prime ministers on the Lebanon crisis.

That is the third round of talks by the mediation panel, which was set up by an emergency meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in January.

The committee had previously met with political and religious leaders at separate conferences in Tunis and Kuwait.

Acting Prime Minister Salim Hoss, who heads a civilian cabinet in Lebanon's dual government, said at a news conference Monday he has dispatched a new note to the Arab League, blaming the current fighting in Lebanon on Aoun's "lust for power."

Aoun, who heads a military cabinet, has made no secret of his hopes to become the next president. The top post has been vacant since President Amin Gemayel's term expired on Sept. 22 with parliament unable to elect a successor.

Minutes before stepping down, Gemayel named Aoun an interim prime minister. But opposition forces rejected the appointment and pledged allegiance to Hoss, who governed under Gemayel.

Aoun, 53, contends the Syrians, who intervened 13 years ago to help curb the civil war, have become an occupation force by taking sides in the Lebanese conflict.

He declared a "war of liberation" to drive the Syrians out, vowing to fight on even at the risk of destroying Beirut.

Syria has 40,000 troops stationed in Lebanon since the

peacekeeping mandate was approved by the Arab League in 1976. They support the opposition quest for an equal share of power with Falangists.

Hoss rejected Aoun's contention, saying that the Syrian military presence was legitimate.

"The Syrian army entered Lebanon in 1976 at the request of the then reigning Lebanese government. This request was later endorsed by the Arab League of which Lebanon is a founding member," Hoss said.

He said any demand for a Syrian pullout should be taken by a united Lebanese government "which is not present at the moment."

He accused Aoun of taking "unilateral decisions that are pushing Lebanon to the brink of a devastating disaster."

Nervous citizens on both sides of the "green line" used the relative daytime lull to make quick trips to nearby supermarkets to buy necessities before the nightly skirmishes.

"It seems our hibernation in the shelter is going to last for a long time," said George Khoury, who lives in the Falangist enclave's Mansourieh residential district.

"I have bought some mattresses, because we cannot go on sleeping on the hard floor, some games for the children and tranquillisers for our fraying nerves," he added.

During the overnight random shelling on East Beirut, sometimes at a rate of 60 rounds per minute, a fuel tank at Beirut port and the city's main power plant were set ablaze, police said.

Ozal rules out early polls despite devastating defeat

ANKARA (R) — Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, defiant in defeat, ruled out Monday the possibility of a snap general election in Turkey following humiliating losses by his party in municipal polls.

"Early general elections are out of the question," Ozal told a news conference. "We were given a mandate until 1992 in the 1987 (general) election and we shall continue to use this mandate in the service of the country."

The reformist prime minister's Motherland Party polled only just over a fifth of the total vote in Sunday's municipal polls, trailing behind two opposition parties.

"The election results show that the people want to try opposition parties in local government only," said Ozal, 61, who has held office since 1983. "The results do not show the Motherland has become an opposition."

But former Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, leader of the second-placed centre-right True Path Party, said: "The people

have lowered Motherland votes to an indisputable point."

"Ozal said he would leave office if election results made it difficult for him to rule. If he is true to his word, he should do this."

Despite the prime minister's statement, political analysts said the combined opposition's fresh strength might well force Ozal to call early general elections, possibly later this year.

With nearly two-thirds of the votes counted in the election for mayors and assemblies in 2,000 cities and towns, the Motherland had won 21.7 per cent of the total.

It received 36 per cent of the vote in the 1987 general elections to take 292 seats in the 450-member parliament.

The main opposition Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) won 28.2 per cent of the municipal vote and the True Path Party 25.5 per cent.

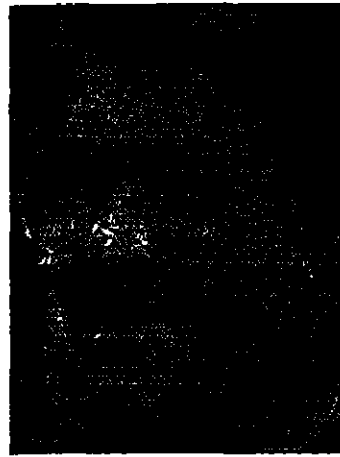
"The people wanted with the election to give us a light slap on the cheek but it has turned into something stronger," said Ozal, who ruled out any form of alliance with Demirel.

"The people have given us the message that they want the cost of living lowered. We shall take additional measures to ensure this."

Inflation, now running at an annual rate of 72 per cent, and Ozal's independent leadership style were main opposition themes in the election campaign.

Ozal said he would announce a cabinet reshuffle in coming days but gave no details.

Political sources said he was likely to increase the number of ministers from the Western-oriented liberal wing of the Motherland Party, a loose-knit



Turgut Ozal

alliance which also includes politicians from the Muslim right.

SHP Secretary-General Deniz Baykal said: "The political balances and perspectives in Turkey have been changed permanently and these changes must be reflected in Parliament."

One surprise was the strong showing of the True Path Party of Demirel, who was twice ousted from government by the army — in 1971 and 1980.

A senior Western diplomat said: "A trend has started against the Motherland and it is not possible to pass off the results by just saying they were only local elections."

"If Ozal stays, he is going to face all kinds of pressure groups making it difficult for him," the diplomat added.



Starvation, disease, war stalk Sudan

By Robert Powell
Reuters

JUBA — Sudanese refugees have fled in vain from starvation, disease and a pitiless war to this southern town, where hunger stalks even the hospitals and rebels are tightening a month-old siege.

Up to two thirds of Juba's 175,000 refugees suffer from malnutrition, estimates David Yaka at the government hospital, which is desperately short of drugs and rips up sheets to use as bandages.

"We can't feed our patients," said Yaka, the senior medical officer. "It is deplorable to call this a hospital."

Bees infest the sagging ceilings of grimy wards, mosquito netting on the windows is in tatters. Flies buzz near the 350 patients who lie listlessly on bare mattresses.

In this strategic town on the Nile, riddled with malaria, jaundice, tuberculosis and cirrhosis of the liver, some beds at the hospital lie empty. Patients must bring and cook their own food and many are unable to.

Juba, the south's capital, is surrounded by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) re-

bels buoyed by a string of victories in recent weeks.

The town relies entirely on airlifts from Khartoum, Kenya and Uganda to avoid starvation.

But only the refugees, crowded into grass huts and makeshift tents on the outskirts of this dusty town are fed free by the international relief agencies that organise many of the flights.

The 100,000 townspeople must pay sky-high prices for maize flown in commercially from Khartoum. There is not a grain to spare.

Two of the 450 prisoners at Juba's crowded jail died of hunger last month, said Sam Kenyi, manager of the Combined Agencies Relief team.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has just offered to supply the hospital with food, but that will only solve one of Dr. Yaka's many problems.

There is seldom electricity and the water comes from a single handpump.

A dog covered with open sores lies dying in the compound. "It could well be rabid," Yaka said.

The thin refugees, dressed in rags, are mostly peasants from

the surrounding countryside who have poured into Juba since 1986.

The SPLA has been fighting a bush war since 1983 to end what it sees as domination of the Christian and animist south by the Muslim and Arabised north.

Juba's Roman Catholic cathedral dwarfs the minaret of the main mosque.

Refugees say both government soldiers and the rebels have burned and looted their villages and that even in Juba they are not safe.

The inhabitants of Lologo Camp on the southern edge of Juba have had to move three times in the past year to escape SPLA raids, which penetrate ever closer to the town itself.

"The SPLA come at night. They are looting," said Hilary Obur, a 19-year-old secondary school pupil who fled his home near Torit, 135 kilometres to the east.

"They are just looking for money, clothes, bicycles, even radios," he said.

"They say, they don't come to kill, but they need property because they don't have clothes," said Alphonse Ochieng, another refugee, as

he took a break from conducting choir practice under a mango tree by the river.

"The war in this country is a very long war. It started in the days of slavery," said Paulino Lukudu Lororo, the Roman Catholic archbishop in Juba.

"It is a racial war, it is religious, it is political, it is economic," he said.

Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi, who Wednesday announced a new government in Khartoum, has said he now wants to negotiate a peace after two years of refusing to talk to the rebels.

An estimated 250,000 southerners died of hunger last year and the United Nations reckons a further 100,000 could starve to death in 1989.

Fatima Duku is one of several refugees who brave minefields around Juba to cut firewood in the bush to sell in the market.

Her eight children cannot live on their maize ration of 300 grammes each per day, she says.

"If we don't sell the firewood, we have to come home and there is no food for the children so they cry," she said with quiet resignation.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Relief arrives for S. Yemen

ADEN (R) — A plane load of relief supplies arrived in Aden from Saudi Arabia Sunday to assist victims of floods which have devastated vast areas of central South Yemen. South Yemen appealed for international aid after the floods, caused by a week of torrential rains in the normally arid region, swept away hundreds of houses and inundated thousands of acres of farmland. At least 16 people were reported to have been killed and tens of thousands made homeless. An official of the Emergency Relief Committee said the authorities were struggling to reopen roads and communications with the stricken areas. Saudi Arabia has said it will send four aircraft with relief supplies to South Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries. The first plane carried 73 tonnes of food, tents and blankets. It has also launched a relief fund with an initial contribution of 30 million riyals (\$8 million) from the Saudi royal family.

Sudan scholars urge breaking with U.K.

KHARTOUM (AP) — The union of the Sudanese Muslim scholars Sunday urged the government to break off diplomatic and economic relations with Britain in protest "The Satanic Verses" authored by British national Salman Rushdie. The union also called on the newly formed government of Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi to expel Britain's ambassador to Khartoum and impose a boycott on all British goods. Dr. Ahmed Imam, the association chairman, told a news conference here that the book is an insult to the Islamic world and therefore, Britain should take measures against it and its publisher, Penguin Books. Imam said a union representative met the British envoy and handed him a protest note earlier in the day. The union groups scholars in universities and high institutions in Sudan.

Barre admits to rights abuse

ROME (R) — Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre has admitted human rights abuses and corruption in his country and says his 20-year-old regime has failed in its aims. In an interview with the Italian magazine Panorama published Sunday, Barre said: "Sometimes we are forced to push to the sidelines our concern to respect the citizen, including human rights. However we are determined to correct any abuses or violations of these sacrosanct rights." Many Western states have suspended aid to the east African country after international human rights organisations reported summary executions, systematic torture and mass detentions. Asked about alleged corruption in his regime, Barre said: "I cannot say in good faith that our administration is free of elements of corruption, embezzlement or misappropriation."

Franjeh visits Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Former Lebanese President Suleiman Franjeh, who invited Syrian troops into Lebanon in 1976, arrived in Damascus Sunday and had talks with President Hafez Al Assad. The official Syrian News Agency SANA said the Maronite Christian leader, accompanied by his son Robert, discussed the crisis in Lebanon with Assad. Franjeh is among former Lebanese presidents and heads of government invited to a meeting in Tunis Monday with an Arab League committee trying to settle Lebanon's political crisis.

86 'Kurds' seek asylum

VIENNA (R) — A group of 86 people applied for asylum in Austria Sunday and immigration officials were trying to establish whether they were ethnic Kurds, the Interior Ministry said. A spokesman said 77 people had been kept in a transit lounge since arriving at the airport from Turkey Friday. They were prevented from flying on to West Germany because they lacked the necessary documents. Seventeen more flew in Saturday and Sunday, but eight agreed to return home, a ministry spokesman said. "They maintain that they are Kurds. But they don't speak Kurdish, they speak Turkish," the spokesman said, adding that immigration officials were seeking to determine their origin. "It makes no sense to allow them to travel onwards if they don't have the necessary permits," he said. Kurds living in the area of Iraq bordering on Turkey could be entitled to asylum in Austria as refugees, the spokesman added.

Hurd visits Bahrain on Gulf tour

BAHRAIN (R) — British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd Monday began a 10-day tour of Gulf states with talks in Bahrain on security cooperation and regional developments, the Gulf News Agency said. It said Hurd, who will also visit Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman, was received at the start of his two-day visit to Bahrain by Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Khalifa Al Khalifa. Hurd is expected to seek Arab support in the war against terrorism and drug smuggling. He will also probably try to clarify reports that four British nationals were on a yacht seized by Iranians in the Gulf last week.

Spy's parents 'losing patience'

TEL AVIV (AP) — The parents of convicted U.S. spy Jonathan Pollard said Sunday they were losing patience with talk of Israeli efforts on behalf of their son, who was convicted of selling top-secret military documents to the Israel. Jonathan Pollard, an intelligence analyst with the U.S. navy, was arrested in November 1985 and is serving a life sentence. His wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, is serving a five-year prison term for conspiracy to receive government property. Morris Pollard, who arrived in Israel last week with his wife Mildred, said he did not know whether the Israeli government was making any effort on behalf of his son. "We hear rumours that there is activity going on, but we really don't know exactly what it is," he said. "We are becoming very impatient." "Our good will will just last so long," he said. Jonathan Pollard claimed his Israeli operators promised him asylum in Israel if his activities were ever uncovered. But the elder Pollard said he had been advised now was not "an opportune moment" to demand Israeli citizenship for his son, because of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's upcoming trip to Washington.

Khomeini discusses future with clerics

NICOSIA (R) — Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, at odds with his designated successor, has held rare talks on Iran's future leadership, the official news agency IRNA said Monday.

It said Khomeini, 86, met members of the body charged with choosing his successor — known as the Assembly of Experts — for an hour Sunday night.

The rare meeting followed blunt disagreements between Iran's supreme leader and his designated successor, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, over the course of the Iranian revolution.

The IRNA report, monitored in Nicosia, did not mention Montazeri and gave no details of the discussions Sunday night.

Montazeri, 66, a frequent critic of extremism in the government's

policies, was recommended as Khomeini's successor by the 83-member Assembly of Experts in 1985 while the Gulf war was at its height.

Khomeini has criticised creeping revisionism among senior officials after last year's ceasefire with Iraq and reiterated commitment to radical, anti-Western slogans of the 1979 revolution in several statements this year.

Montazeri, always an advocate of more freedom of economic and political activity, last month urged officials to repent past mistakes and change what he said was Iran's image as a nation of killers.

Despite harsh attacks on his moderate views by Khomeini, Montazeri renewed his criticism of corruption in government and called on Khomeini to order an independent inquiry.

Yazov visits Syria, warns of buildup

DAMASCUS (R) — Soviet Defence Minister General Dmitry Yazov drew attention to the military build-up in the Middle East Monday and said conflict in the region could threaten world progress on disarmament.

Yazov, in a statement issued in Moscow before his scheduled arrival for talks with President Hafez Al Assad, said the convening of international Middle East peace conference was an essential first step to peace.

"The military capabilities (in the Middle East) are much bigger than the economic and demographic weight of the Middle East on the international level, he said in the statement issued by the Novosti News Agency.

"There is a real danger that the (global) disarmament process might be blocked due to the absence of moves towards a just political settlement in the region," Yazov said.

Many states in the region bordering the Soviet Union have acquired or developed relatively long-range missiles and some have chemical arms. Iran and Iraq built up powerful arsenals during their eight-year war, as did neighbours who feared the conflict might spread.

Yazov, the first Soviet defence minister to visit Syria for 19 years, said his four-day visit would focus on military ties with Syria, the Soviet Union's main Arab ally.

Conflicting reports persist in boat hijack

MANAMA (AP) — There were conflicting reports Monday about the yacht of an Arab tycoon said to have been hijacked by Iranian naval units with up to five members of Kuwait's royal family and four Britons aboard.

Official statements in Kuwait, Bahrain and Britain denied knowledge of the incident, and Tehran withheld public comment on the report.

However, diplomatic sources said Iranians have confirmed to them that the boat was seized when it strayed into Iranian waters, but that it later was released.

The leading Kuwaiti newspaper Al Sayassah, and some shipping executives expressed belief that the whole story developed as a result of a hoax distress call.

"Rumours are flying, people are still frantically trying to get to the bottom of that story," said an independent diplomatic source in

Kuwait, who refused to be identified.

The British Foreign Office said: "All our investigations and inquiries have drawn a complete blank."

Asked whether that meant there was no hijacked yacht, a Foreign Office spokesman, who could not be named, said: "Not that we can tell."

Meanwhile, British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd arrived in Bahrain at the start of a Gulf tour aimed at discussing cooperation in combating terrorism. The British embassy said he would not talk to the press before Tuesday night, when he is scheduled to hold a news conference.

A Bahrain-based veteran shipping executive, who insisted that no one on the island has firm word on the reported hijacking, said: "The story does not sound unlikely."

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JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME ONE
15:30 Kuran
15:45 Programme review
15:48 Children programmes
15:50 Educational programme
17:30 Religious programme
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:05 Programme on world news
18:20 Programme on children
19:10 Agricultural programme
19:45 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:30 Arabic programme
23:00 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Amies d'Ilusion
19:00 News in French
19:15 French varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Hit Squad
21:10 Tales from the Hollywood Hills
22:00 News in English
22:20 Hunter

PRAYER TIMES
04:00 Fajr
05:25 Sunrise/Duha
11:41 Dhahr
15:11 'Asr

CHURCHES

17:56 Maghreb
19:14 'Isha

Stt. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swedish Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
Stt. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzavanta Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
Baptist Congregation Tel. 822605
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 821264

WEATHER
Balkan supplied by the Department of Meteorology
It will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered rain. Winds

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

will be northwesterly moderate. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with northerly moderate winds and calm seas.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 6 / 16
Agaba 12 / 25
Deserts 5 / 18
Jordan Valley 10 / 23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 18, Agaba 28. Humidity readings:
Amman 46 per cent, Agaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Kayed Halayleh 793522
Dr. Tayser Khair 686857
Dr. Issa Haddad 897007
Dr. Mohammad Hisham 818604
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 783336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Naioukh pharmacy 636732
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimooni pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Abdul Karim Al 'Abweh (—)
Al Shara'a pharmacy (985238)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ghada 'Akkawi (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

Dr. Abdul Karim Al 'Abweh (—)
Al Shara'a pharmacy (985238)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ghada 'Akkawi (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 605800
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 62209093
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 943402
Traffic Police 65639091
Public Security Department 656000 / 685111
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661776
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information 12
(directory assistance) 17
Overseas Calls 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 773111
Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RU Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53000

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 64428162
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn 64441262
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 66417134
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843846
Al-Musker Hospital 65727719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416466
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7710113
Al-Badr, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marks 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224030
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)833323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)91071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)86732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)273535
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nefes Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in file per kg.
Almonds 800 / 600
Apple 300 / 400
Banana 350 / 300
Banana (Mukammal) 300 / 250
Beans 900 / 800
Broad beans 170 / 120
Cabbage 120 / 100
Carrots 230 / 200
Cauliflower 130 / 100
Cucumbers 320 / 280
Dates 500 / 400
Eggplant 250 / 200
Garlic 300 / 250
Grapefruit 360 / 300
Lemon 360 / 300
Lettuce (per one) 100 / 70
Marrow (large) 150 / 120
Marrow (small) 250 / 200
Orange (Shamouni) 300 / 320
Orange (local) 300 / 240
Onion (dry) 250 / 200
Onion (green) 160 / 120
Peas 300 / 250
Pepper (hot) 580 / 500
Pepper (sweet) 230 / 180
Potato 320 / 280
Spinach 90 / 60
Strawberry 2500 / 2000

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (03)532005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
04:30 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:35 Baghdad (RJ)
09:15 Barcelona, Agaba (RJ)
09:15 Jeddah (RJ)
09:30 Cairo (RJ)
09:45 Agaba (RJ)
09:50 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
09:55 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:00 Abu Dhabi, Kuwait (RJ)
10:30 Miami, New York (RJ)
10:30 Montreal, New York (RJ)
10:35 Copenhagen, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:35 Athens, Istanbul (RJ)
10:40 Vienna (RJ)
20:45 Milan (RJ)
20:45 Rome (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:30 Kuwait (KU)
13:30 Moscow, Larnaca (SU)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:30 Agaba (RJ)
10:45 Rome, Paris, Madrid (RJ)
11:00 Milan (RJ)
11:00 Vienna (RJ)
11:30 Athens, Istanbul (RJ)
11:30 Paris (RJ)
11:40 Vienna, New York (RJ)
11:45 Frankfurt, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, London (RJ)
12:15 Rome (RJ)
17:15 Agaba, Rome (RJ)
20:00 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:00 Cairo (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
23:00 Kuwait (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
11:25 Kuwait (KU)
14:00 Larnaca, Moscow (SU)
16:00 Baghdad (IA)
16:45 Tripoli (LN)
18:25 Dubai (EK)
18:25 Damascus (AZ)

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

CROWN PRINCE VISITS ARMY UNIT: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday discussed with officers and soldiers of the Prince Hassan Third Royal Armoured Division, issues related to training and the division's various activities. Prince Hassan expressed admiration in their high standard of training (Petra).

FASHION SHOW: Her Royal Highness Princess Taghrid Monday attended a fashion show held by the Beirut University College Graduates' Club. The show proceeds will be used for scholarships to students pursuing studies at Jordanian universities (Petra).

INVESTMENT: The Council of Ministers Monday endorsed the recommendations presented by the committee for encouraging investment. These recommendations recognise 12 new projects as economic projects and consequently extend to them the exemptions listed in the law for the encouragement of investment (Petra).

CABINET DECISIONS: The Council of Ministers Monday formed Jordan's delegation to the meeting of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) which is due to be held in Switzerland. The delegation will be led by the director general of the Post Office and Postal Savings Corporation. The Council of Ministers decided to create two new departments at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, one to provide investment services and the other to conduct studies on investments and accumulate information and data. The Council of Ministers also decided to appoint Aqaba Region Authority President Bassam Oqash as the government's representative at the Ports Corporation board of directors to serve for two years (Petra).

SECURITY: Public Security Department Director General Abdul Hadi Majali Monday returned home after a several-day visit to West Germany during which he held talks with West German security officials on means to develop mutual cooperation in technical fields. He also received the second helicopter which was donated by the West German security forces in accordance with the agreement of technical aid signed between the two countries. The third helicopter will be delivered within three months (Petra).

Jordan, N. Yemen sign electricity agreement

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — A delegation representing the North Yemen Electricity Authority (NYEA) will arrive here in April to implement an agreement signed by the NYEA and the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) on Sunday, according to a JEA announcement. It said that agreement on the visit was reached in talks conducted over the past two days by the two sides led by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hisham Al Khatib and the Yemeni Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs Jamal Mohammad Abdo. In the meantime, the announcement said, the JEA will go ahead with a project of preparing designs, specifications and tender documents pertaining to electrification projects in North Yemen. The project entails supplying electricity to 800 villages and human settlements in North Yemen through a loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The agreement which was signed Sunday provides for mutual cooperation in electricity generation, maintenance and management, the development of power generating units, setting up power control units, installing transformer stations and power line networks and power distribution fields. Both sides agreed to set up a committee to follow up the implementation of the agreement.

Les Musicomediens are coming to town

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Noor Al Hussein Foundation's National Music Conservatory and the French Cultural Centre present one of France's most famous musical groups in a concert of opera bouffe. The group, Les Musicomediens, will give two concerts under the patronage of Hind Sharif Nasser, chairperson of the National Music Conservatory's Committee. The concerts will take place at the Royal Cultural Centre Thursday, March 30, 1989. Both concerts will be at 8:00 p.m. Les Musicomediens consists of nine young persons who act, sing and dance and five musicians who wear white punchinello costumes and sit at the back of the stage, acting with their colleagues. Les Musicomediens, now considered the best performers of musical theatre in France, will present two one-act operettas by the German-born master of opera bouffe (farical comic opera) Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) entitled *Il Signor Fagotto* and *L'ile de Tulipatan*. "Il Signor Fagotto" concerns a music-mad bourgeois fooled by his own servant disguised as a famous modern composer, Fagotto. "L'ile de Tulipatan" is the impossible love story between Alexis and Hermosa. After an indescribable embroilment of travestie people, a marriage ends the operetta. The humour and fantasy of Offenbach's music, the skillful orchestration, the light acting, the bright staging, all blend together to promise a performance of the most stylish French operetta. Louis Dunoyer de Segonzac, oboist and musical director has orchestrated the two pieces for the five instruments, in such a way that they sound like vintage Offenbach played with light touches. The staging is done by the experienced artistic director, Maurice Jacquemont, who has become known in theatrical circles for his precise and humorous staging. Knowledge of French is not necessary to enjoy these two hours of music and laughter. Les Musicomediens are on a Middle Eastern tour, of which Amman is the last leg. They have performed in Baghdad, Abu Dhabi, Aleppo and Damascus.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- * An art exhibition by seven Jordanian artists at the Art Gallery of Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation — 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 3 - 6 p.m.
- * An exhibition of paintings by Mohammad Al Jalous at Alia Art Gallery.
- * An art exhibition by Moroccan artist Al Hashemi Izza at the Gallery, Jabal Luweibdeh.
- * An art exhibition displaying paintings by children at the Housing Bank Complex.
- * An art exhibition by Yusra Abu Ghazaleh at Philadelphia Hall, Holiday Inn.
- * A photography exhibition displaying photos depicting Jordan's historical and touristic sites at the University of Jordan.
- * An exhibition of Jordanian national heritage displaying Jordanian-made carpets and traditional costumes at the University of Jordan.
- * A book exhibition at the Wafai Tai Industrial School, Irbid.

LECTURE

- * A lecture by Prof. Dr. Dieter Weiss entitled "Socio-economic Development as Evolutionary Process — From Quantitative Planning to Flexible Adaptation" at the Goethe Institute — 7:00 p.m.

FILMS

- * A James Bond video entitled "Dr. No" at the British Council — 6:00 p.m.
- * A video featuring artists such as Madonna, Talking Heads, Bon Jovi, Grateful Dead, Run DMC and Prince at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

Jordan signs chemical waste treaty

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan was one of 110 nations that signed an international agreement on controlling the process of dumping dangerous waste at the Swiss city of Basel March 20.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Marwan Hmoud attended the conference and signed the document for Jordan. The minister who returned to Amman Sunday evening said that the agreement which helps to protect the world's environment provides for cooperation among Third World nations to combat pollution and protect the environment from toxic waste and other harmful chemicals.

The conference passed seven other resolutions calling for the formation of a special team to create a proper vehicle for the implementation of the agreement.

ment, arranging for compensation to be given to countries that fall victim to dangerous waste operations, and paving the way for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to cooperate with different states in dealing with dangerous waste and the protection of the environment, according to Hmoud.

The agreement, the minister noted, banned dumping of dangerous waste in other countries unless prior agreement has first been secured and outlined measures to be taken to facilitate international cooperation to implement its provisions. According to the minister, the 28-point agreement also provides for an exchange of information related to dumping dangerous waste and means of protecting the environment. The agreement, he added, is to be known as the International

Agreement on the Trans-Boundary Movement of Perilous Waste. Last June, the UNEP board of directors set up a committee of experts and technicians to work out an international agreement, and several meetings were held later to formulate the final draft for the Basel conference.

The UNEP was established by the United Nations in 1972 to coordinate international cooperation in matters related to the human environment. In cooperation with other international organisations, and governments, UNEP aims to maintain a constant watch on the changing state of the environment to assess problems using a wide-range of data, and techniques and to promote projects leading to environmentally sound development.

Arab statistics institute opens meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Institute for Research and Training in Statistics Affairs Monday opened a three-day meeting here to discuss a proposed programme designed to activate the institute's operations during 1989.

The meeting, by the institute's board of trustees, will study the prospect of arranging for personnel from Arab countries to conduct post graduate studies in statistics, and organising short training courses and seminars and related programmes for the coming year.

Dr. Abdul Hadi Alawin who is director of Jordan's Department of Statistics and member of the board delivered a speech in which he called for the development of the institute to rise to the needs of the Arab World's economic and social development. It is time for the institute to adapt to the growing needs and also to the new trends in scientific development by absorbing a greater number of experts who can help achieve the Arab countries' needs and aspirations, Alawin noted.

The institute, he added, represents one of the pan-Arab endeavours to carry out joint Arab action and serve higher Arab interests.

Chairman of the board Adnan Shihab laid stress on the training courses organised by the institute and said that they are of immense importance to help personnel employed by Arab statistics departments acquire further knowledge in statistics and their application and employment in socio-economic fields.

Ministers inspect model school

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi accompanied by Minister of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat, Minister of Agriculture Yousef Hamdan Al Jaber and Minister of Youth Awad Khleifat Monday called at the Bint Uday model secondary school for girls in Amman. They toured the school's premises and facilities and inspected its activities and programmes. Hindawi later addressed a meeting outlining the Ministry of Education's experiments and endeavours to set up model schools for boys and girls in the provinces, and said these model schools will serve as pioneering centres to transfer the existing schools from their traditional form into creative centres.



Horticulture meeting opens at university

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from five Arab countries including Jordan Monday opened a three-day meeting at the University of Jordan to discuss horticulture and to review 54 working papers on the subject.

The meeting, organised by the University of Jordan, is being attended by delegates from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Sudan and Jordan who will discuss regional cooperation in horticulture, and ways to increase fruit production as a way to help ensure food security for the Arab World.

The Ministry of Agriculture's Secretary General Salem Al Lawzi told the meeting that there was need for the Arab states to bridge the gap between the volume of food produced in the Arab World and food imported by the Arabs from foreign countries through research programmes, close cooperation and the employment of modern technology in food

production fields. Jordan, for its part, has achieved a near self-sufficiency in the production of vegetables and fruits, producing a total of 862,000 tonnes of vegetables and 347,000 tonnes of fruit in 1988, Lawzi noted. He said that part of the production was exported to Arab and foreign countries, being a surplus for the local market.

Lawzi said that the opening of Arab countries' markets for Jordanian products helped to boost the horticulture business in the Kingdom. At the outset of the meeting, Dr. Subhi Al Qasem, dean of the university's higher studies faculty, outlined the horticulture situation in Jordan and countries represented at the meeting. Qasem urged the delegates to do all they can to encourage horticulture sector in their countries in view of its immense benefits to the national economy.

90 specialists attend bio-technology meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 11 Arab countries and eight regional and international organisations opened a four-day conference in Amman Monday on perspectives of modern bio-technologies in the Arab countries with the participation of nearly 90 specialists in various scientific fields.

In an address to the opening session Minister of Planning Taher Kanaan called for the establishment of a national centre in Amman to help boost the Arab region's capability in bio-technologies and promote the work of the Kingdom's scientific research centres.

Such a centre, which could be established at the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), could be instrumental in directing and supervising the works of sectors involved in agriculture, stockbreeding, pharmaceuticals, medicine, food processing and other scientific fields, the minister said.

When established the centre will contribute to the country's endeavours to ensure food security by helping to produce new strains of vegetables and fruit trees, and improved seeds, according to Kanaan, who opened the meeting on behalf of His Royal Highness Crown

Prince Hassan. Kanaan announced that the European Community has decided to grant Jordan \$1.3 million for the benefit of bio-technology experiments at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), and said that the HCST was striving to secure \$1 million from the Canadian Agency for International Development to finance a similar project at the University of Jordan.

Academic cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — The University of Jordan and the West German University of Ulm Monday signed an agreement for scientific cooperation between the two universities.

Under the terms of the agreement, which was signed by University President Abdul Salam Al Majali and the Ulm University vice president, the two sides will encourage bilateral cooperation in sciences, engineering, medicine and computer science and will exchange visits by teachers to conduct research and give lectures. They also decided to exchange publications covering these fields.



ROYAL VISIT: Her Royal Highness Princess Aysheh Bint Al Hussein Monday called at the Ministry of Youth and met with Minister Awad Khleifat who briefed her on the ministry's programmes and activities to promote the youth and sports movement in the Kingdom. The Princess expressed her appreciation of endeavours by the ministry and its affiliated organisations in these fields. Later, the minister presented the Princess with the ministry's shield for distinguished achievement in youth affairs and the Jordanian Olympic Committee badge (Petra photo).

Jordan, India discuss increasing trade volume

AMMAN (J.T.) — An Indian team Monday met with Minister of Industry and Trade Hamdi Tabbaa and offered to participate in a number of Jordan's development projects. The team, led by the Indian Ministry of Trade undersecretary, said that India can help build the Shidieh Aqaba railway, to transport phosphate mined at Shidieh for export via the port city, and to help build the Al Wahdeh Dam which is being constructed at the Jordanian Syrian border.

A state following the meeting which was attended by the visiting team members and senior officials from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said that the two sides discussed economic relations and the prospect of increasing the volume of trade between India and Jordan to help adjust the trade balance between them, which is heavily in favour of Jordan.

They also discussed India's possible contribution to the Kingdom's development schemes, joint ventures and increased Jordanian imports of Indian national products, the statement noted.

The visiting team, which arrived here Sunday evening, represents India's side to the joint Jordanian-Indian economic com-

mittee set up to boost trade and economic cooperation.

The joint committee which opened a meeting later Monday reviewed trade exchanges between India and Jordan and India's ideas about participation in the Kingdom's development schemes. Ministry of Industry and Trade's Secretary General Mohammad Saqqaf who led the Jordanian side to the meeting expressed Jordan's desire to increase its imports of Indian goods and briefed the Indian team on the Ministry of Industry and Trade's arrangements to enable the Kingdom's public and private sectors to import Indian products.

Saqqaf expressed hope that the Indian industrial fair which due to be organised in Amman shortly will help Jordanians acquaint themselves with Indian products. Saqqaf also hoped that a planned visit to India by a Jordanian trade delegation will boost trade cooperation between the two countries.

Saqqaf noted that the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and

the Arab Potash Company import most of their equipment and other materials from India which imports most of Jordan's phosphate and potash.

During the four-day visit the two sides will review ways of overcoming obstacles impeding trade, and increasing Jordan's exports of phosphate, potash and cement to Indian markets.

India is the largest importer of Jordanian phosphate and potash and the Kingdom's total exports of the two commodities to India in 1987 alone amounted to JD 22 million. Jordanian-Indian trade and economic relations were discussed during a visit to Jordan in the past year by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

The Indian visitor Mr. R. Renjen and his delegation were later received by Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Khaled Al Haj Hassan who voiced Jordan's desire to develop relations and cooperation with India. Jordan, the minister said gives preference in trade to countries which import the Kingdom's products.

STUDENTS: A student delegation from the British Reading University Monday visited the Local Society Development Centre in Dhiban. The 26-member delegation was briefed on the conditions which led to the establishment of the centre and its activities in the region (Petra).



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Boost to perestroika

WHEN Boris Yeltsin, the opposition candidate for the Moscow seat of the New Congress of People's Deputies, wins, as projected, with a big margin over Mr. Yevgeny Brakov, the official party candidate, he will give Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika policy a new boost as well as a clear message to the Soviet people at large that the wind of change, which is sweeping across the country, is unstoppable. It would be wrong therefore to interpret the success story of the winning horse in the Soviet capital's contest as a rebuke or even a rebuff to Mr. Gorbachev. It is safe to assume that President Gorbachev deliberately permitted Mr. Yeltsin to run against the candidate of the official Communist Party in order to make a point to his arch enemies and the enemies of reform. If there is a message in all this for the Soviet president it is to go ahead at full speed in reforming the Soviet Union from head to toe rather than to go at it hesitantly. Having been under constant attack and questioning by the conservative forces within the Soviet Communist Party and beleaguered by initial failures to deliver on his long awaited promises to improve the lot of the average Soviet citizen, President Gorbachev is in dire need for a mechanism to gauge the sentiment of the country in a way for all, inside and outside the Soviet Union, to see and appreciate.

Now that Boris Yeltsin has cleared the way for President Gorbachev, one would expect that the perestroika policy in the Soviet Union would attempt to profit from the green light beaming across the country and accelerate the reform schemes to an extent that could liberate the country from the gravitational pull being so passionately and tightly upheld by the conservative elements. These conservative forces are duty bound to accept defeat and recognise that they have lost touch with the sentiment of the Soviet people and that time is ripe to turn another page in the history of their country. To sum up, this first ever contested election in the Soviet Union in 70 years serves as a barometer to gauge the opinion of the Soviet citizens and will go down in the annals of the country as a genuine turning point in the modern history of the country. What and how the Soviet system will do with it will determine the fate and credibility of not only perestroika but also glasnost in the Soviet Union.



Ramzi Al Ra'i

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

IN an editorial Monday Al Ra'i daily newspaper tackled the question of Lebanon and the role of the Arab League committee to end the communal fighting in that country. The paper said that the heads of the warring parties do not respect any ceasefire agreement nor do they give any regard to the feelings of the Lebanese people or their religious beliefs, but are intent on pursuing futile efforts to establish their authority. The paper said the Arab World can do nothing to the Lebanese if they themselves do not realise the danger they are in, and insist on pursuing confrontation rather than negotiation to achieve a settlement. However, the six member Arab League committee should first of all focus its attention on stopping the fighting and forcing the two sides to respect a ceasefire so that the way could be paved for a reconciliation, the paper added.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily comments Monday on the opening of the first Egyptian industrial fair in Amman due Tuesday. He says that the fair which followed a similar one by Jordan in Cairo reflects Jordanian and Egyptian commitment to bilateral agreements on trade and economic cooperation, and demonstrates the determination on both sides to help each other to promote national industries within the framework of the Arab Cooperation Council. There is no doubt that the two fairs will be followed by other in Cairo and Amman, a development which is bound to stimulate trade on the one hand, and activate the industrial sectors in Jordan and Egypt, Salah Abdul Samad adds. He says it is hoped that the next step will be joint endeavours by Jordanian and Egyptian industrialists and businessmen in such economic endeavours which naturally will lead to further integration — a goal provided for in the Arab Cooperation Council's declared objectives. The two sides, he adds, are already involved in the production of lean meat and fodder, a project which gives very encouraging indicators for the future.

In an editorial Monday Sawt Al Shaab daily tackles the Palestine problem which it said can only be solved with the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The paper said that while the world is directing its attention towards resolving regional conflicts, Israel and its leaders are showing increasing stubbornness as to the termination of the conflict in the Middle East, and the recognition of the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland. The paper said the iron-fist policies and acts of terrorism practised by Israel against the Palestinians can by no means resolve the issue. King Hussein, the paper noted, seized the opportunity of talking to the press in Egypt this week by emphasising the fact that the countries of the Arab Cooperation Council stand solidly behind the PLO in its quest to attain peace. It said that regardless of the obstacles in the path to peace, the Arabs will continue their backing for Palestinian efforts to regain the usurped territories.

By Jim Drinkard
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President George Bush's compromise policy toward Central America was a tacit admission that his predecessor's military approach has failed.

The policy is also a signal that Congress is willing to give Bush more latitude in the region than allowed Ronald Reagan.

But because the new bipartisan approach leans heavily on how Nicaragua's Sandinista government reacts over the coming months, it represents a respite, rather than a final settlement, of the long-running policy dispute between Congress and the White House.

For now, Democrats and Republicans in Washington are willing to read the somewhat vague two-page policy agreement in their own ways.

Democrats stress language supporting regional peace efforts and provisions permitting aid to the contra rebels to be used to relocate them into Nicaragua and integrate them into the political process there.

Republicans emphasise that such resettlement is strictly voluntary, and that the agreement does not bar future military aid to the rebels should Sandinista promises be unfulfilled.

The agreement means the United States "still supports the contra as a viable force," said Senate minority leader Bob Dole.

Dole said he hoped the peace process would work and that the Nicaragua government would open its political system to opponents.

"But if not, if the Sandinistas continue to do what they have been doing — saying one thing and doing another — you're going to see at least an effort for military aid in the Congress," he said.

Democrats pointed out that Bush's new secretary of state, James Baker, had specifically de-emphasised that kind of thinking during hours of talks with key lawmakers over the past month.

At the very outset of those conversations, they noted, Baker said military aid — the issue that plagued Reagan's relations with Congress — would play no role in the discussions.

Announcing the new policy at the White House Friday, Baker said, "we all have to admit that the policy basically failed to some extent, because we were not united."

That conclusion is underscored by an unrelenting draft report from the General Accounting Office, which concludes that Reagan's single-minded reliance

on military solutions, both in Nicaragua and other countries in the region, "slowed progress toward economic reforms and development," which it says are the region's real problems.

"U.S. policies toward the region since 1980 appear to have been driven largely by a need to counter the threat of Soviet bloc expansionism," says the report, being prepared for Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The new accord between Congress and the White House puts that goal on a diplomatic track. It notes that continued Communist support for "violence and subversion" in the region violates the five Central American nation's peace agreements.

The accord calls on the Soviets and Cubans to come into compliance with the peace process by ending their military backing for the Sandinistas and the rebels fighting El Salvador's government.

Congress' next step will be to pass, soon after it returns next month, legislation providing the \$45 million needed to continue "humanitarian" aid to the contras through February 1990, after Nicaragua's scheduled national elections.

Because of Baker's efforts to

reach bipartisan accord on the underlying policy, that step is expected to be far easier than in past aid renewals.

More significant in the long run than the agreement to give the new administration an extension of contra aid is Congress' willingness to restore to Bush the latitude to conduct policy in Central America that it had revoked from Reagan.

"The Congress recognises the need for consistency and continuity in policy and the responsibility of the executive to administer and carry out that policy, the programmes based upon it, and to conduct American diplomacy in the region," the agreement said.

Reagan's covert war against the Sandinistas, which led to the Iran-contra affair, also prompted a plethora of restrictions on money spent in the region. In the Iran-contra affair, money from secret U.S. arms sales to Iran was diverted to the contra rebels.

For Bush, lawmakers are willing simply to say that they support the use of rewards and punishments to encourage the Sandinistas along the road to democratisation, and for now will let the administration decide which actions to take and when to take them.



The challenge of Arab food security

By Samir Yousry

GRAVE concern over Arab food security was duly expressed by Arab specialists during a conference held on the subject in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, during the period Dec. 19-21, 1988. It was concluded that about one third of the Arab population is liable to be struck by famine by the year 2000 if measures necessary to combat that threat are not immediately implemented.

In its Jan. 16, 1989 issue, the Arab Oil and Gas magazine highlighted this alarming threat and noted that through the deliberations of the conference, it became evident that Arab food self-sufficiency deteriorated considerably during the past few years, particularly in sugar, wheat and corn. Despite the relative expansion in land earmarked for grain production, production fell compared to world standards, which meant that productivity had diminished. This situation was reflected in the substantial growth of foreign grain imports that reached 40 million tonnes in 1986 compared to 2.8 million tonnes back in 1960. Overall net food products imported by Arab countries on

the other hand totalled around \$25 billion in 1987 against \$1.0 billion registered in 1973 and is expected to exceed \$90 billion annually by the year 2000, which amounts to more than 1.5 times the Arab oil revenues achieved in 1988. Consequently, the Arab World has become increasingly dependent on the outside world to provide for its food requirements.

The United Arab Emirates' minister of economy and trade expressed the situation correctly during the conference when he was quoted as saying that out of ten loafs of bread required presently by the Arab Nation, seven were actually imported. A situation which entails grave political and economical consequences.

It is worth noting that a recent study conducted by the director general of the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development shows that cultivated Arab land represents 32 per cent of the total 133 million square hectares of cultivable land in the Arab World, and that value of agricultural products constitute some 9 per cent of collective Arab gross domestic product with variations

from one country to another depending on the country's reliance on agriculture.

Ironically, the specter of famine raised by the conferees in Abu Dhabi comes at a time when Sudan, which was considered a few years ago as the future breadbasket of the Arab World, is currently witnessing this dreaded fear.

The deterioration in the agricultural sector in the Arab World stems basically from several negative factors among which are insufficient capital, increasing urbanisation and an explosion in population growth (around 3 per cent annually). Arab population estimated at 196 million in 1988 is expected to reach about 250 million in the year 2000.

In retrospect, food security becomes a hazardous problem that the entire Arab Nation has got to urgently solve. For despite the vast stretches of cultivable lands only limited areas are being exploited due to undeveloped infrastructures in several Arab countries and the lack of capital necessary to construct and develop them. As a result, Arab countries are forced to incur bil-

ions of dollars annually to counter the deficit in their food supply. The implications of such a situation should not be ignored as it entails increasing future domination by the industrialised countries and the probable use of food as a weapon against the Arab countries.

In view of the foregoing analysis and owing to the impediments and difficulties facing the development of the Arab agricultural sector, it becomes a matter of vital importance that our countries act now and concentrate more attention in that field endeavouring to provide the appropriate climate and stability required to attract Arab investments which their development plans desperately require. Measures for economic and legal cooperation and coordination between Arab countries deem a necessity to achieve such objectives in addition to providing the financial and judicial assurances and facilities required in order to achieve and promote the noble objective of Arab economic development and market integration — O.A.P.E.C. Monthly Bulletin.

Poets on Moscow's Arbat street

By Elizabeth Shogren
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Police have begun clamping down on poets peddling their politically charged verses on the Arbat, a pedestrian street that has attracted bold dissenters under president Mikhail Gorbachev's openness policy.

"It's still very difficult to live as a poet if you don't sing the song of the government," said Alexander Truby, a poet affected by the recent crackdown.

Lev Zaikov, Moscow Communist Party boss and a member of the ruling politburo, has charged that "under the flag of democracy, banalities have blossomed and sometimes overt anti-Soviet propaganda," was heard on the central Moscow street.

Parasites, bums and anti-social elements have found a place on the Arbat, Zaikov said in a Feb. 24 speech published in Moskovskaya Pravda, Moscow's party daily. He asked why local party officials had not acted to deal with the "intolerable situation."

The poets said the day after Zaikov's speech was published, police started preventing them from showing or selling their poetry. Yuri Luboverin, who had been displaying his poetry freely since August, said he has been detained twice this month by police who confiscated his collections of poetry and issued him citations.

"We thought that life here would become freer and freer after the Arbat was opened, but now it's going backwards again," said Luboverin, 51. "I only want them to open the Arbat again for poets, so we can convey our points of view to the people."

Arkady Zon, another poet who frequents the Arbat, said he knows 10-15 poets who have been detained and otherwise hassled by police.

"Our poems are our weapons," Zon said. "We need to continue to fight like (emigre author Alexander) Solzhenitsyn and (Nobel peace prize Laureate Andrei) Sakharov fought. The people need our poems, so we don't go back to the time of stagnation," a term referring to the repressive Brezhnev years.

The poets said the recent crackdown is the first since Moscow authorities started to permit

poets to sell their work on the Arbat last spring.

Zon and another poet, Alexander Pokrovsky, said that since Zaikov's speech, they have sold their poetry surreptitiously by keeping copies of their verses in large sacks and opening them when the police were not looking.

In one poem, Luboverin bemoans the continued lack of freedom in Moscow:

"In London's Hyde Park people can express all their opinions from soapboxes. ... But what's happening in Moscow — this city of power? Glasnost wears a muzzle that they are afraid to take off. The period of stagnation continues. Zaikov and his ilk drag perestroika backwards."

The Arbat, closed to auto-

mobile traffic, attracts tens of thousands of Muscovites and tourists daily. Artists sell paintings, poets recite verse, musicians play instruments and sing and some Soviets give what seem to be impromptu political speeches.

"It's the only such street in the Soviet Union," said Pokrovsky, 39. "Until this time the Arbat was free, but maybe it was only a corridor of freedom. We don't know what it will become tomorrow."

Zon said from 50 to 100 of the artists and poets who show their work on the Arbat are organising and have elected a chairman to fight for their interests.

Truby was openly showing his work on the Arbat last week, but said police were preventing him

from selling anything.

The Arbat, at the heart of a 600-year-old district just west of the Kremlin, is known as Moscow's traditional cultural centre. The charm of the 1,200-metre street has been memorialised in Russian song and verse through the centuries.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the area was a fashionable aristocratic district and the home of classical Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

The wooden mansions that lined the Arbat burned down in 1812 in the great fire that consumed Moscow after Napoleon's troops entered the city. The buildings were replaced with empire-style residences, many of which survive to this day.

OPEN FORUM

In-service teacher training

RECENTLY, a team of U.K. experts in the field of primary education were invited to Jordan to run a series of workshops at the New English School in the areas of science, maths and technology. Other schools were invited to attend and several participated.

The recent introduction of the national curriculum in the U.K., means that pupils there are to be taught within a strict framework laid down by the central government and tested nationally at the ages of 7, 11 and 14. There are, therefore, many parallels to be drawn between the U.K. and Jordanian systems.

With this in mind, the aim of the workshops was to help teachers to develop schemes of work to fit within the structured curriculum but with a practical, hands-on approach and a much greater interface between subjects.

In the science workshops, certain guidelines were laid down. The teacher should first attempt to arouse the child's curiosity, channel that curiosity, encourage interaction between child and child, child and teacher and by this to raise hypotheses. Once hypotheses have been formulated, to test them, find a result, draw conclusions and then to apply the conclusions. "Science in action" is the key phrase, so that in order to express scientific ideas in a concrete way, working models can be constructed in technology, light and colour techniques may be used in art, and all areas of language should be explored. Writing stories in science terms, science terms in stories, drama — involving pupils and puppets to improve understanding of science concepts.

Maths is a part of our daily life and is used on some level by everyone, everyday. This is how it should be taught, not as an isolated subject, but as a part of life. The children need to experiment, to discuss and to evaluate maths concepts in a concrete way. Again, interface across subjects is very important, so music and physical education may be ideal ways of introducing mathematical concepts.

The area of technology is a fast expanding field, both in industry and in schools. In the U.K. technology is introduced at a very early age. Most children when given a toy, try to take it apart to see how it works. Using this natural curiosity of the child, many quite difficult concepts can be introduced. Technology may be rather disturbing both to teachers, who feel they may not have sufficient background to pass it on to children and to education authorities who feel it may be very expensive.

During the workshops we found out that technology is often a matter of common sense, that through simple construction quite difficult concepts can be explained and more important perhaps, it can be done cheaply. All one needs is an endless supply of squeezy bottles, elastic bands and a pair of scissors.

Those people who were fortunate enough to attend Mr. Mike Farr's lecture at the University of Jordan, were treated to a marvellous display of working machines made in this way. The machines are robust enough to be linked up to a computer and with the correct programme can be made to work through it.

The greatest value of the workshops was the stimulation and new ideas given to the teachers. They were encouraged to think in different ways and to look at the problems from a different angle. Subject teachers were given ideas to discuss with each other — how they could cooperate with topics across the curriculum.

The discovery, interface approach to education means a lot of preparation from teachers. It needs discussion and planning between departments, but in the end it is the child who benefits from a more all-round meaningful education; the child enjoys his time at school and finds that learning is fun.

I.B. Hofazy
Director,
New English School,
Amman.

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JAPANESE EDUCATION:

Moving towards diversity and flexibility

JAPAN — In 1988 Japan's educational policies were amended according to "the White Paper."

The formal education that most Japanese children receive takes them through elementary school (six years), junior high school (three years), senior high school (three years), and in many cases also university (four years) or junior college (two years). Attendance is compulsory only at elementary and junior high school, but the entrance rates to senior high school and university (including junior college) are as high as 94 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively.

Early education

Compulsory education in Japan consists of six years at elementary school and three years at junior high school. This is preceded by two or three years at kindergarten and followed by three years at senior high school. At each stage there are special schools for the blind, the deaf, and the mentally and physically handicapped. In addition there are technical colleges, special training schools, and other in-

stitutions for junior high school graduates who do not enter senior high school.

Attendance at elementary and junior high schools is almost 100 per cent, and the ratio of junior high school graduates enrolling in senior high school has remained at the 94 per cent level for the past decade.

To safeguard equal opportunities in education and to maintain and improve educational levels under this system, the central and local governments are continuing efforts to improve educational content and to increase the number and quality of teachers, facilities, and equipment.

Rigid & uniform

Japan's educational system and its management, however, are sometimes criticised for being too uniform and rigid to respond to rapidly changing social and economic conditions and to meet the demands of the future. There clearly is a need to introduce new ideas and improvements into the system.

While seeking to maintain the high attendance rates and educa-

tional levels achieved in elementary and junior high school education so far, Japan must now take positive steps to place more importance on the individuality of students, to develop this individuality, and to foster a diverse range of abilities in children. To achieve this, it must tackle various problems, including the improvement of educational content: The development of a more diverse and flexible system of education, especially of upper secondary education; and the improvement of the quality and abilities of teachers. With this in mind, the government is pursuing the following policies.

Improving educational content and teaching methods

To maintain a fixed level of basic education throughout the country and to ensure equal opportunities in education, the ministry of education stipulates courses of study as standards for elementary and junior high school. The ministry regularly makes adjustments to these courses of study to take into account the changing times: It

will make some revisions in fiscal 1988 and continue to do so when necessary in the future.

The basic aim of the latest revisions is to foster compassionate and strong members of society with the ability to adapt to social changes and also to improve education so that it emphasises the fundamentals and at the same time gives rein to students' individuality.

Moral education

Moral education can play an extremely important role in the development of responsible members of society. Interest in moral education in Japan has increased in recent years as people have noted that the rapid social and economic changes that the country has experienced have led to economic strength on the one hand but moral weakness on the other. The government seeks to improve moral education through school activities as a whole.

Student counseling

Though incidences of violence and bullying in schools are on the

decline, they still occur frequently, in addition to which the number of children playing truant is increasing year by year. These problems involve a complex combination of school, family, and social factors and must be tackled in a comprehensive manner. For their part, schools are trying to respond by improving their systems of school counseling from both a medium- and a long-term perspective with the aim of making students' lives and human relations as rewarding as possible.

As more and more junior high school graduates go on to senior high school, the abilities, adaptability, and interests of senior high school students become more diverse. To respond to this situation, schools are making efforts to promote their own special characteristics and to increase cooperation with other senior high schools.

Kindergartens and special education

The ratio of preschool children attending kindergartens nation-



Tokyo schoolgirls looking over one of their textbooks.

wide was 63.7 per cent in 1988, but there are large regional discrepancies, with some municipalities not having any kindergartens at all. Steps are therefore being taken to establish at least one kindergarten in every municipality so that all children who wish to attend can do so.

With regard to special education for physically and mentally handicapped children, efforts are being made to provide schooling that is tailored to their particular needs so that as far as possible they can lead independent lives. These efforts will be further promoted in the future.

The success of school education depends a great deal on the ability of teachers. The government intends to continue efforts to improve the quality and abilities of teachers through appropriate teacher training, hiring policies, and on-the-job training programmes.

Computer businesses thrive in Poland

By Timothy Heritage
Reuters

WARSAW — "In Poland it is easier to buy a computer than a tin of black shoe polish."

This bold statement by the weekly Warsaw Voice may not be far from the truth in crisis-ridden Communist Poland — thanks to a thriving private sector and a few sometimes unscrupulous middlemen.

Poles spend hours queuing in state shops for basic items from meat to toilet paper. Telephones are so unreliable that people joke that they cannot even ring the house next door.

But personal computer sales are booming. More than 400 private computer firms have sprung up, mostly in the last three years, and are raking in big profits from a hungry public demand which the state fails to meet.

A few Poles have also struck it rich by going to the West and Far East to buy equipment not on sale in Poland and selling it at huge profits to state and private firms — despite Western restrictions on technology exports to the East Bloc.

"Personal computer technology is just a few months behind the West," a Western diplomat told

reporters. "Private people and firms have stepped in where the state is sluggish."

Polish demand for computer until the end of the century is estimated at one million units but the output of the state electronics industry is only 3,000 units a year.

Enterprising Poles, seeing a gap in the market, set up their own companies, copied designs of modern Western personal computers and sold "clones" at prices Poles could afford.

"Highly trained engineers and scientists could find no outlet for their talent in state industry. The state is not innovative and was slow to react, so the private firms jumped into the virgin ground," a Western envoy said.

"Some may frown at their growing rich so fast but were it not for the engagement of private resources, it would have been a long time before computers were as widely available in Poland as they are today," the Warsaw Voice said.

The Communist authorities apply few restrictions to technology imports. Private computer firms have been allowed to flourish since the market boomed in the mid-1980s and new laws have been introduced encouraging private industry.

Zloties

Even the individuals who travel abroad with a fistful of dollars and come back with equipment which they sell in the Polish currency, Zloties, play a useful role.

They provide state industry with foreign technology without the government forking out valuable hard currency needed for servicing a foreign debt of \$37.9 billion.

They also help meet the big public demand by selling Western personal computers and parts, for a price, at weekend markets in Warsaw where money changes hands at great speed.

"A personal computer is more than a status symbol, it's a link to the modern world. There is an acute anxiety not to fall behind," a Western diplomat said.

"If you walk around Warsaw you see big Mercedes cars and big expensive houses with swimming pools. A lot of these people made their money doing this," Christophe Musial, international sales manager of West German firm Star Micronics Deutschland GmbH, added.

Smugglers

Western experts said some "semi-smugglers" bring in equip-

ment banned under Western restrictions on the transfer to the East Bloc of technology which could be used for military or strategic purposes.

Polish firms displayed such equipment at a Warsaw Computer Fair in January, they said.

The personal computer boom may be limited because Polish technology is generally regarded as outdated or inefficient, experts said. Use of facsimile machines, for example, is restricted by the poor quality of telecommunications.

"There is a problem implementing high-level technology in industry that is decades behind and falling apart," a Western

diplomat said. "The market may soon reach saturation point."

Experts also say larger computers are likely to remain more than a decade behind the West because restrictions are much tighter on bigger, more advanced computers.

But Western firms, many of whom came to the computer fair in January, are fighting to get a foot in the Polish market.

"The Poles don't have much money to buy equipment at the moment. East Europe is our target now because we have already conquered the rest," said Bahk Jong Woo, manager of South Korean company SKC Europe GmbH.

Drinker's dreams brewer's nightmares

By Mark Trevelyan
Reuters

LONDON — British beer drinkers toasted prospects of cheaper brews and more choice after a government pledge to encourage more competition in the industry.

But the country's major brewing groups said the proposals could sound the death knell for the traditional British pub.

Trade and Industry Secretary Lord Young unveiled plans to smash what he termed a "complex monopoly" in the beer market by limiting brewers to owning 2,000 pubs each.

Britain's six biggest brewers, which ensure a market for their beers by owning their own outlets, could be forced to sell a total of 22,000 pubs. They disputed Young's claims that the shake-up would bring down prices, arguing that many pubs would be threatened with closure.

"There is a grave risk that prices might go up rather than down. We don't see anything in the report to indicate lower prices and wider choice," said Ben Hanbury, corporate affairs director for Bass Plc, which owns 7,300 pubs.

Devotees of traditional ales, which are brewed mainly by small independent producers, welcomed the plans as likely to make it easier to get landlords to sell their favourite beer.

"It's great news for the independents, which are flowering in the desert at the moment and finding it very, very difficult to get a foothold in the market," said Andrea Gillies, editor of the Good Beer Guide.

The top six brewing companies — Allied Lyons Plc, Bass Plc, Courage Holdings Plc, Scottish and Newcastle Breweries Plc, Whitbread and Co Plc, and Grand Metropolitan Plc — have at least six months' grace while the government finalises its proposals.

One solution for some could be to sell their brewing interests and move further into the more profitable retailing side by buying more pubs.

Analysts said Allied Lyons and Grand Met were among those most likely to sell their brewing units and keep their pubs.

"There are no clear winners and losers. All we can say is Grand Met would be less affected as it's already disposed of some of its tenancy pubs," said Philip Morrissey of Brokers Kleinwort Greaveson.

Another solution, especially for Bass, Britain's biggest brewer, could be to split production and retailing into two legally separate companies, though analysts said it was far from clear if this would satisfy the government.

Analysts say the 22,000 excess pubs are worth at least \$5.2 billion. They estimate the annual British beer market at around \$15.5 billion, making Britons second in Europe only to West Germans.

Analysts said it was unclear how keen foreign brewers would be to exploit the chance to enter the British pub market.

"I can't see that many of the foreign brewers really wanting to come in and own pubs," said Kleinwort's Morrissey. He noted continental brewers barely own their own outlets.

The national Licensed Victuallers Association (LVA), whose members include more than 20,000 pub landlords, said it feared thousands of pubs would be snapped up by large retail chains with no experience of the character and history of British pubs.

"Other people associated with the leisure industry will be coming in to own pubs. The chances are, they could be turned into more impersonal managed outlets," LVA Chief Executive John Overton told reporters.



The water and rocks of the Hwayangdong Valley

By Yoon Jong-Hyeon
Photographs by Yi Jeong-Heon

Hwayangdong Valley is famous for its fantastic rock formations and dazzlingly white boulders awash in the crystal water of the Hwayakch'on Stream that snakes through it for about 4 kilometres. The Valley has been known for its beauty since ancient times. A geographer of Choson, Yi Chung-Hwan praised it as "the most beautiful valley this side of Mt. Kungangsan." It was once home to Song Shi-Yol, one of Korea's greatest Confucian scholars and statesmen. Locals still believe that the scholar who died some 300 years ago haunts the place in the form of a crane.

WHITE boulders cleansed by crystal water so pure that it dazzles the eyes are evocative of the white clad literati of the Choson period (1392-1910) who prided themselves on their austere way of life. Hwayangdong Valley in Koesan-gun, Ch'ungch'ongbuk-do and its Hwayakch'on Stream that snakes 4 kilometres along its nine bends have long been celebrated for the breathtaking beauty created by their white boulders and fantastic vertical rock formations. Yi Chung-Hwan (1690), a famous geographer of the mid-Choson period, wrote in his Taengni chi (Ecological Guide to Korea) that Hwayangdong is the most beautiful valley this side of Kungangsan Mountain.

The locals are extremely proud of their valley, so much so that there is a saying they "would not exchange the rocks of the valley for the Big Country," the Big Country being China, the land the people of Choson envied more than any other place in the world.

Each of the scenic spots has a name very thoughtfully made up after its shape and impression. They include Kyongch'onbyok, the Heavenward Wall, which is so named because it seems to support heaven; Ch'omsongdae, the Star Observatory, which is a mound of rocks soaring up 100 metres as if someone piled them up to study the night sky; Haksodae, the Crane Nesting Rock, on which a legendary blue crane is said to have dwelled; Waryongam, which looks like what it means, a Whirling Dragon; and many other rocks that stir the imagination.

The rocks in the Hwayakch'on Stream are famous for their lack of moss. Pak Yong-Gyu, who has been living here for 35 years, thinks that no moss can grow on them because most of the rocks are elvan. He says that even the strongest spirits turn into plain water after they are soaked in granulated, crisp-dried elvan for about ten days. Aside from the scientific plausibility of his theory, the valley is so clean and unpolluted that it seems moss can not even get a foothold here. At least the tourists, who flock to the valley at about 10,000 a day during the summer, are so impressed by its purity that they do not leave behind litter.

The stream water is the colour of diluted blue ink which makes one wonder if the age-old description of crystal-clear water as "blue" might have originated from this valley. The poetically named Unyongdam Pool is especially bewitching when, as its name indicates, clouds are reflected in its mirror-like water. There is also Kumsadam, the Pool of Golden Sand, where the sand at the bottom sparkles like gold. Reputed to be the best of the many lovely spots in the valley, the pool is also famous for the Amsojae Pavilion, which is where the great Confucian scholar and statesman of the mid-Choson period Song Shi-Yol (1607-89) lived and studied for 15 years. Viewing the leisurely flow of the stream from under an old pine tree Song planted, one feels that the legend that Song haunts this place in the form of a crane is not at all improbable.

—Seoul Magazine.



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Kuwait wants OPEC to raise oil output ceiling

NICOSIA (R) — Kuwait's oil minister was quoted Monday as saying OPEC should raise its oil output ceiling by at least eight per cent to 20 million barrels per day (b/d) in the second half of 1989.

"I think the increase in OPEC production this year ought to be better than one million b/d, especially starting from the low level of the first six months," Sheikh Ali Khalifa Al Sabah told the Nicosia-based Middle East Economic Survey (MEES).

"In the second half, we ought to be talking of an increase of at least 1.5 million b/d," he said.

OPEC (the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) agreed last November to restrict output to 18.5 million b/d for the first half of 1989 in hope of boosting prices to its target of \$18 a barrel.

Iraq rejoined the pact following a two-year absence after it was granted its long-standing demand for a quota equal to that of Iran, its foe in the Gulf war.

Sheikh Ali told MEES that OPEC, having solved the short-term problems of Iran and Iraq, should now concentrate on the quota problems of five or six other members, notably Kuwait

and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"If we can solve the problem of these five or six countries... I think we would have peace for the next three or four years," he said.

"Otherwise the increases would be proportional and this would mean there would always be continuous non-adherence to quotas," he added.

Sheikh Ali said rising demand for OPEC oil, which he predicted would reach 24 million b/d in 1992 or 1993, would absorb the higher output without depressing prices.

"If we are intelligent enough... it will have very little effect on prices since we still have a great deal of capacity to go," he said.

But he said present positive trends in the oil market were no guarantee against a future collapse in prices.

"There is no guarantee, especially if we do not solve our short-term problems, that be-



Ali Khalifa Al Sabah

tween now and 1995 there will not be another price collapse. We have been moved out of the intensive care unit... but we are still in the hospital," he said.

Oil prices have risen to 17-month highs on reports of OPEC output discipline, cooperation from non-OPEC producers and reduced supply due to accidents near an Alaskan port and on platforms in the North Sea.

Sheikh Ali told MEES the real test of non-OPEC cooperation with OPEC would be whether other producers extended planned cutbacks to the second half of 1989 even if OPEC raised its ceiling.

Seven non-OPEC countries, including the Soviet Union and China, have announced export cuts of five per cent for the second quarter of 1989 while Colombia and North Yemen have agreed to freeze exports.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

S. Koreans to produce noodles in China

SEOUL (AP) — A South Korean food company has signed a joint-venture agreement to produce instant noodles in communist China, the company has said. Samyang Foods Co. said it signed a 50-50 agreement with Qingdao No. 2 foodstuff factory to construct a plant in Shandong province to produce the noodles, as well as soup, dried agro-marine products and processed grain. Samyang said it would provide production facilities and technical assistance and receive three per cent of the sales as royalties. Annual sales were expected to reach \$12 million, it said. Qingdao will market the products in China and Samyang will export them to South East Asia and Eastern European nations, the company said. Construction of the plant is to start in May, it said. Seoul recently has been trying to improve its ties with communist countries to expand its trade base and improve its relationship with communist North Korea.

Americans increase savings

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' personal income increased a strong one per cent in February while spending rose at half that pace, as people diverted more of their earnings into savings, the government reported Friday. The Commerce Department said income rose to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$4.32 trillion last month, following a robust revised gain of 1.7 per cent in January. Consumer spending, meanwhile, rose 0.5 per cent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$3.38 trillion in February after increasing a revised 0.4 per cent in January. Most of the gain in personal consumption expenditures, which include virtually all consumer spending except interest payments on debt, came in increased spending for services. Analysts said that was partly a reflection of an upturn in heating bills last month after January's mild weather. Most analysts expect gains in income and spending to slow this year in response to a campaign by the Federal Reserve Board to nudge up interest rates and relieve inflationary pressures on the economy.

Study highlights cash crops to help Third World farmers

WASHINGTON (R) — A study has revealed that small farmers in developing countries who add cash crops to their farms can improve both their diets and incomes.

The study disputes popular theories that cash-crop farming causes farmers to neglect their own food needs and makes them economically vulnerable — although it found that in the Philippines some of the theories held true.

"Commercialisation has great benefits," it is accompanied by correct government policy and continued production of staple crops, said Joachim Von Braun, an author of the study for the International Food Policy Research Institute.

The institute is associated with international development organisations and aid foundations.

The five-year study followed thousands of farmers in newly commercialised farming areas of Guatemala, Gambia, Rwanda, Kenya and the Philippines.

It found that when farmers grow crops for export such as

sugarcane, corn, vegetables and rice in addition to the staples with which they feed their families they can improve farming methods and earn money to improve their health.

"Poor people don't waste their money," Von Braun said. "They buy more food, they buy better food, and they try to get better access to health and sanitary facilities."

Some private aid organisations and others have argued that only large farmers profit from growing cash crops and that small farmers are hurt.

Some of those criticisms were borne out in the Philippines, said institute researcher Howarth Bonis.

He said the introduction of large-scale sugarcane farms in the 1970s caused many tenant farmers who grew corn to lose their leases and forced them to take low-paying labourer jobs.

"The problem with the introduction of sugar was that the people didn't have a secure right to their land," Bonis said.

In addition, the whole Philip-

pines economy has been rocked by declines in U.S. sugar consumption, said Walden Bello, a researcher for Food First, a San Francisco-based food policy group that has criticised large-scale commercial farming.

In contrast, commercial fruit and vegetable farming has proven to be a success in Guatemala, Von Braun said. He said small farmers were uniquely able to provide the intensive labour needed for such crops.

He said farmers who grow cash crops cultivate their staple crops more intensively and are able to benefit from methods and supplies used to produce the cash crops.

But Von Braun said several conditions are needed to make cash-crop production by small farmers work.

They include strong land ownership or tenancy rights, government protections from extreme market fluctuations, reliable buyers for the crops, adequate infrastructure and credit, and attention to those who do lose out when farming becomes commercialised.

Thousands of Thais begin exodus from Singapore

SINGAPORE (AP) — An exodus of thousands of Thais working illegally in Singapore has started this week by land, sea and air to beat a March 31 deadline.

Recently amended immigration laws make aliens liable to three months in jail and three strokes of the cane for entering Singapore illegally or overstaying more than 90 days. Thai and Singapore officials agreed last week on an "amnesty" until March 31 for repatriation.

Second Secretary Biravij Suwanpradhis said that to ensure Thais do not attempt to return illegally, news of the new law would be circulated in various parts of Thailand.

Two special trains, Thai air force C-130 transports and Thai navy ships are helping repatriate the workers, Thai embassy officials have said.

About 2,000 have been sent home in recent days and thousands of others thronged the embassy to have travel documents processed. Thai students studying in Singapore were helping embassy staffers with the paper work, Biravij said. Thai officials were uncertain how many workers remained in hiding, either with expired work permits or fake documents. Construction industry sources estimate that as many as 10,000 might surface after Tuesday, the industry's traditional monthly payday.

Unofficial estimates put the number of Thais working illegally in Singapore, mostly as labourers on building projects, at more than 20,000.

Labour is in short supply, particularly in construction, ship re-

pair and heavy industry, jobs shunned by affluent Singaporeans who enjoy the highest standard of living in Asia after the Japanese.

Illegal workers toil at menial jobs for 10 to 20 Singapore dollars (\$5.18 to \$10.36) a day. Locals would demand three times as much.

Boostered by strong overseas demand and foreign investment, the economy bounced back from recession four years ago. But a limited labour pool in this city-state of 2.6 million people is regarded as a threat to continued growth.

Authorities don't want the booming economy to suffer from a lack of labour. But they are equally determined not to let the country depend indefinitely on low-skilled foreign workers.

About 150,000 foreigners hold work permits.

Venezuela continues price hikes

CARACAS (AP) — Venezuela has announced a 65 per cent increase in electric rates for commercial users and price increases on some food items and medicines, the daily newspaper El Nacional reported Saturday.

The increases, which were published by the government last week, would go into effect next month, the newspaper said.

More than 250 people were killed in rioting that began Feb. 27 sparked by price increases and other austerity measures announced by the government to make Venezuela more attractive to foreign lenders.

Under the price increases, most industrial users of electricity would receive a 65 per cent initial rate hike followed by five- to six per cent annual increases, while residential users would receive a 30 per cent initial increase, El Nacional quoted Energy and Mines Minister Celestino Armas as saying.

Some 460,000 residential users would continue to receive electric power at present subsidised rates, Armas said, according to El Nacional.

Medicine such as penicillin and boric acid would go up by as much as 46 per cent beginning this week, along with increases of as much as 100 per cent in basic foods such as corn flour, El Nacional said.

The newspaper also reported Saturday that Venezuela wants to replace Chase Manhattan with the Bank of Tokyo as a head of an advisory committee of creditor banks negotiating repayment of the South African nation's \$33 billion foreign debt.

The advisory committee represents Venezuela's 450 creditor institutions in negotiations on servicing the country's debt, Latin America's fourth largest.

El Nacional reported Finance Minister Eglee Iturbe said Venezuela would seek a restructuring of the creditors' advisory committee because of dissatisfaction with the negotiations.

Venezuela suspended capital payments of its debt in January. Earlier this month, it suspended interest payments until September, saying resumption of pay-

ments would depend on the success of the austerity programme.

The economic programme included price hikes, an exchange rate unification and other fiscal reforms designed to attract fresh loans from financial institutions and multilateral lenders.

According to Iturbe, a dispute between chief negotiator Edgar Leal and Chase Manhattan representative Dominique Clavel led to Leal's request that the committee be disbanded and individual negotiations started with each creditor institution, El Nacional reported.

The advisory committee refused the suggestion, but Venezuela is asking that the committee be reorganised to include the Bank of Tokyo and possibly another European bank. Iturbe said, according to El Nacional.

Along with Chase, the Bank of America and Lloyd's of London form the leadership of the committee of 13 institutions, El Nacional said.

The restructuring would imply the removal of one of these institutions from its leadership position, preferably Chase, Iturbe said, according to El Nacional.

Christies auction house reports big profits jump

LONDON (R) — Christie's International, the world's second biggest fine art auction house, has reported a 31 per cent rise in profits for 1988, the year it sold the most expensive 20th century work of art.

"The quality and range of works of art coming for auction, together with the current price levels being obtained, is most encouraging," said chairman Lord Carrington.

Pre-tax profits rose to £42.5 million (\$73.1 million) from £32.5 million (\$55.9 million), while turnover rose by 24 per cent to £120.3 million (\$206.9 million).

Sales of impressionist and modern works of art accounted for a large proportion of turnover, Carrington said.

Highlight of the year was the

sale of Picasso's "Harlequin and Young Acrobat" for £20.9 million (\$35.9 million), a record price for a 20th century work of art.

The sombre study of two circus figures was bought by a Japanese department store for an unidentified price.

Christies also sold Hollywood's most famous private art collection — that of producer William Goetz and his wife Edith — for \$85 million, a record total for the sale of a single collection.

Carrington said the current business year had started well and he was optimistic about prospects for the rest of 1989.

The company said that in order to make its shares more marketable it was planning a one-for-one share split and a bonus issue of new shares.

Arab insurance group doubles profit

BAHRAIN (R) — The Bahrain-based Arab Insurance Group (ARIG) has said it had nearly doubled its 1988 net profit to a record \$29.5 million from \$15.1 million the previous year. ARIG General Manager Nooruddin Nooruddin told reporters the rise in profitability was mainly due to a 68.9 per cent increase in investment income to \$35.8 million. Income from reinsurance rose to \$9.8 million from \$6.9 million in 1987 despite unfavourable trends in the insurance industry worldwide, he said. ARIG would recommend a shareholders dividend of \$12 million in 1988, up from \$10.5 million in 1987, Nooruddin added. The firm was established in 1980 by the governments of Kuwait, Libya and the United Arab Emirates which have equal stakes. It opened its first overseas branch in Hong Kong in December 1988 and another in Tunis in March 1989.

Danes blame themselves for foundering economy

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — A large majority of Danes would tighten their belt to save the country's foundering economy, according to an opinion poll.

Seven out of 10 Danes would accept a wage freeze for a few years to reduce the balance of payments deficit and two-thirds of those questioned were willing to trim private consumption and accept a lower living standard.

The survey covered 1,800 Danes.

The survey found what it called a "crisis consciousness," with 72 per cent saying the Danes themselves were to blame for the nation's huge deficit and foreign debt.

The results were seen as a major turnaround in Danish attitudes, after years of national overconfidence.

The only sacrifice Danes were not willing to make, according to the survey, was to pay higher taxes, already among the world's highest.

At the end of 1988 Denmark's net foreign debt, which economists say is the highest per capita in the industrial world, approached 300 billion kroner (\$41 billion), or 130 per cent of annual export earnings.

After months of wrangling, employers' and unions recently agreed on a two-year deal for the public and private sectors that probably will mean a fall in real wages compared with an annual inflation of 4.5 per cent.

Iranian parliament rejects cutting subsidies

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's parliament rejected price rises for staple goods, approved a special arms spending measure and voted nearly \$1 billion for reconstruction in this year's budget, the official news agency IRNA said Saturday.

IRNA, monitored in Nicosia, gave new details of the \$140 billion budget approved March 20, before the Iranian new year holidays.

It quoted parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as rejecting a proposal to cut subsidies for sugar, chicken and eggs, saying: "It isn't right to

hand price increases to people across the country as a new year's gift."

"Today you raise the price of sugar by a dime, tomorrow everything made with sugar, like soft drinks, pharmaceuticals, sweets and various sorts of goods will become more expensive," Rafsanjani said.

Deputies voted against the subsidy cuts because of fears about the effect of inflation on the poor, IRNA said.

It gave no figure for defence spending but said a measure was approved which would allow extra spending in case the eight-

year war with Iraq erupted again. Arms spending could be boosted if requested by the acting armed forces commander, a post Rafsanjani now holds, and approved by spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The daily Resalat has reported that the budget provided for \$5.85 billion to be spent on strengthening the armed forces, just half last year's figure. A ceasefire was declared in the war last August.

IRNA said parliament approved nearly \$1 billion for reconstruction in war-damaged regions, about 40 per cent more

than the government had requested.

The energy ministry was allocated the foreign exchange revenue from 50,000 barrels of crude to spend on repairing damaged oil installations, including the Kharg Island terminal, the agency said.

It said Iran Air was given permission to put 70 per cent of the cost of tickets on international flights towards the purchase of new aircraft. The airline signed a letter of understanding last November to buy eight Airbus, IRNA added.

E. Germany shows economic flexibility

LEIPZIG, East Germany (R) — East Germany appears to have woken up to changes in world commerce and is becoming more flexible in its foreign trade dealings in contrast to its refusal to reform domestic policy.

Western businessmen at the Leipzig trade fair in mid-March said there was no sign East Berlin was about to loosen its grip on what it exports and imports, but it was responding to changes in the Soviet Union, Western Europe and the Third World.

"A new pragmatism is beginning to shine through," said one Western trade attaché.

Diplomats and traders recalled East Germany had in Leipzig announced its first ever joint venture with a foreign company — a Soviet computer software house — and was working more closely with West German firms.

Up to now East Germany has preferred protocols, long-term accords and a few direct deals

with big companies.

"Virtually without exception, Western fair exhibitors have found a greater readiness on the part of the GDR (East Germany) to give its firms a freer hand in relations with trade partners," the West Berlin daily Tagesspiegel reported.

Businessmen canvassed by Reuters said experts from East German companies had particularly homed in on medium-sized West German firms for talks on cooperation, although they always said any deal would need authorisation from East Berlin.

The new trend appear almost contradictory to East Berlin's reluctance to countenance Soviet-style reform. East Germany says policies it launched in 1971 have been successful and that internal change would be dangerous.

Businessmen said the more open approach evident at the Leipzig fair underscored East Germany's reliance on foreign trade — 50 per cent of its national income is derived from exports — and its awareness that it had to change commercial practices to survive.

Explaining why East Berlin switched tack and set up a joint venture, electronics ministry spokesman Karl Dietrich told

Reuters: "The firm was born out of an objective necessity."

Another official said the venture had "burst the dam" and would be followed by others with Soviet companies.

East Germany is the second largest East Bloc importer of Western goods. Turnover with West Germany, its main Western partner, was 14.2 billion marks (\$7.6 billion) in 1988.

"(East Germany's) existence depends on stronger and more profitable exports," leading East German commentator Karl-Heinz Arnold wrote in the daily Berliner Zeitung.

Cheap Third World products were taking a hold in East Germany's traditional markets, European Community states were gearing up for their planned internal market after 1992 and Moscow was giving Soviet companies autonomy in foreign trade.

Reforms in other East European countries too meant East Berlin had to think again about marketing strategy, he said.

Other East German officials and Western diplomats see this as a key reason for East Berlin's new adaptability.

"We have to become far more flexible," said one East German businessman, adding that the

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U.S. dollar	538.0	542.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	406.0	412.6
Pound Sterling	922.2	932.8	Dutch guilder	234.1	236.4
Deutschemark	286.3	289.7	Swedish crown	94.0	94.8
Swiss franc	329.2	333.2	Italian lira (for 100)	36.0	36.4
			Belgian franc (for 10)	137.2	138.2



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Yeltsin sweeps to victory

MOSCOW (R) — Rebel Communist Boris Yeltsin, in a stunning challenge to the Kremlin, swept into the Soviet Union's new-style parliament as deputy for Moscow Monday with a crushing 89 per cent of the poll.

The result was given to journalists by election officials at Moscow City Hall as jubilant Yeltsin supporters at his headquarters only a few hundred metres away burst into shouts of "We won. We won."

The outcome of the voting in the country's Electoral District Number One marked a startling comeback for the 58-year-old Siberian who was expelled from the communist party's ruling Politburo a year ago for "political errors."

It was also a clear demonstration of the popularity of his calls for more radical reform, an end to official privilege and the dismantling of the power of the party bureaucracy.

In an interview with Reuters just before the official results were released, Yeltsin said his triumph would force the authorities to speed up Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestroika" reform programme.

Soon after the result became known, the official TASS news agency quoted Gorbachev as saying the elections had given the Soviet people the chance to express their views.

"The main moving force in perestroika is Soviet man, and today we can register the fact that Soviet man has spoken up — the voters' intense activity has shown that."

"And even if not everyone is pleased by the outcome of the elections — well, there is nothing that can be done about it. The master of the country has spoken," Gorbachev added, according to TASS.

In his telephone interview with Reuters earlier, Yeltsin expressed delight at the outcome.

"I am really grateful to Muscovites for having made this choice. Now I am really concerned about how to implement the program-

me I have formulated," he told Reuters correspondent Ralph Boulton.

Electoral commission chairman Igor Orlov read the Moscow returns to Soviet and foreign reporters in the ornate, chandelied white hall of the city council building on Gorky street near the Kremlin.

He said Yeltsin received 5,118,745 votes against 392,633 for his opponent, Zil car plant Director Yevgeny Brakov, who had strong backing from the Moscow City party which Yeltsin himself headed from 1985 until late 1987.

Neither candidate was present for the declaration — which came as first results reaching Moscow from across the country in Sunday's history-making Soviet elections showed other radical reform candidates making a strong showing.

But at the offices of Gosstro, the state construction committee of which Yeltsin is deputy chief, jubilant supporters in the corridors slapped each other on the back.

Yeltsin's stunning victory came despite the fact that the top lead-

ership, including Gorbachev, had signalled strongly that they disapproved of his populist approach.

Only 10 days before the election, the first since just after the Bolshevik revolution in which voters were offered a choice, the party Central Committee decided to investigate whether he was violating Communist discipline.

And just a few days earlier, the committee released the text of speeches by the entire Kremlin hierarchy — from reformists to conservatives — condemning him for allegedly seeking to split the party.

Gorbachev himself told reporters after casting his own vote Sunday that the country had to avoid "stupidities and great leaps forward" in what appeared to be a clear reference to Yeltsin's calls for a radicalisation of perestroika.

Nationalists win in Baltic republics

VILNIUS, Soviet Union (R) — Nationalist movements demonstrated massive public support in the first multi-candidate general

elections since the three Baltic republics were incorporated into the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party leaders of all three republics won election but provisional figures released Monday showed many members of their governments and ruling Communist Parties were defeated.

Provisional figures from Lithuanian radio showed candidates of Sajudis, a movement with strong nationalist overtones, won outright majorities in 30 of that republic's 42 seats.

The Popular Front in Latvia won 25 of 40 seats in Sunday's voting for a new Soviet parliament without needing a second round of voting, a spokesman for the organisation said.

And Estonia's Popular Front won around half that republic's 19 seats, according to preliminary figures. Estonia's Communist Party leaders have themselves been associated with nationalist positions.

The parliamentary elections were the first major electoral test for the movements, which emerged as powerful forces after they were formed last Autumn.



Yeltsin casts his vote Sunday at a Moscow polling station.

COLUMN

'Space chick' is born

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (AP) — A "space chick" has hatched from an egg that made a five-day flight aboard the space shuttle Discovery, officials said Saturday. The 41.8-gram male chick, named "Kentucky," emerged from its shell about Friday night at Kentucky Fried Chicken headquarters, the company said in a statement. The fast-food restaurant chain sponsored the experiment. The experiment, designed by Purdue University student John Vellingger, is designed to measure the effects of a weightless environment on embryo development. The chick looks normal but only time will tell how well it does, said Gregg Reynolds, a spokesman for Kentucky Fried Chicken. "The only thing we're sure about now is that it's a boy," he said. Vellingger was on hand, Reynolds added, and was "as excited as an expectant father."

There's nothing like a persistent thief

IRONDEQUOIT, New York (AP) — An apparently determined robber stole a wallet and called his victim a short time later to find out the personal identification codes for his credit cards, police said. The 65-year-old victim, who was not identified, hung up on his assailant, said Captain Robert Longue. "We're assuming it was the same guy," Longue said. The robbery occurred Tuesday while the man was walking with his dog. The robber approached the man and demanded his wallet, Longue said. The victim reported the man pointed a small handgun at him. He gave the robber his wallet, which contained about \$130 and credit cards, Longue said. When the victim returned home, a man telephoned him and asked for his code numbers, presumably to get cash from automatic teller machines. The victim hung up and called police, Longue said.

Donkeys instead of wheelchairs

HARARE (AP) — The Zimbabwe Red Cross has launched an appeal for donkeys to replace wheelchairs used by disabled people in the countryside. "What is the point of giving a disabled person a wheelchair in the rural areas where you know it's un-navigable and long distances are involved?" said spokesman Victor Chitongo. "A donkey has been found to be suitable because it's unlike a wheelchair which needs repairs," he said. "It feeds while the user is in class, the only problem arises when it can't be used to take the disabled to the toilet." Chitongo said the society was willing to pay about 15 for each donkey, about a tenth the cost of a wheelchair.

Don Johnson totally 'amazed'

NEW YORK (AP) — Actor Don Johnson says he is constantly amazed that men and women share the same planet because women are civilised and men are "barbarians." "Women put grace, poise in our world," Johnson said in the April issue of Cosmopolitan magazine. "I'm sure they thought of civilisation first. Men are basically barbarians. I think women indulge us, allow us our racing boats and other toys so that we're out of their hair long enough for them to accomplish the task of maintaining civilisation." Asked why women are attracted to him, the star of the "Miami Vice" television series and the new movie "Dead Bang" said: "Maybe they sense that I truly appreciate them."

The weather at major world capitals & cities

	MIN.	MAX.	Weather
AMSTERDAM	10	18	64 Clear
ATHENS	10	17	50 Clear
BANGKOK	25	33	91 Clear
Buenos Aires	11	24	52 Clear
CAIRO	14	24	57 Cloudy
CHICAGO	01	24	34 Rain
COPENHAGEN	05	11	50 Clear
FRANKFURT	02	17	41 Clear
GENEVA	01	24	34 Clear
HONG KONG	13	25	55 Clear
ISTANBUL	06	13	55 Clear
LONDON	10	18	64 Clear
LOS ANGELES	08	18	64 Clear
MADRID	04	22	72 Clear
MECCA	23	33	90 Cloudy
MIAMI	20	28	70 Cloudy
MONTREAL	01	11	50 Clear
MOSCOW	01	24	34 Cloudy
NEW DELHI	17	23	65 Cloudy
NEW YORK	06	18	65 Cloudy
PARIS	09	18	64 Clear
ROME	04	24	75 Clear
TOKYO	09	14	57 Cloudy
VIENNA	02	18	64 Clear

M indicates missing information.

India goes public with Gandhi report

NEW DELHI (AP) — The government Monday released a secret report that accused Indira Gandhi's personal secretary of 20 years of complicity in the prime minister's 1984 assassination.

The former aide, Rajendra Kumar Dhawan, was not immediately available for comment. But the government said in a statement that the allegations against him had been investigated and that "he had no hand in the assassination."

The report accused Dhawan, 52, who left the post shortly after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination but returned to a powerful role last month as a key adviser to her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi.

With the consent of parliament, the government for nearly three years withheld the findings of the special commission appointed to investigate Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

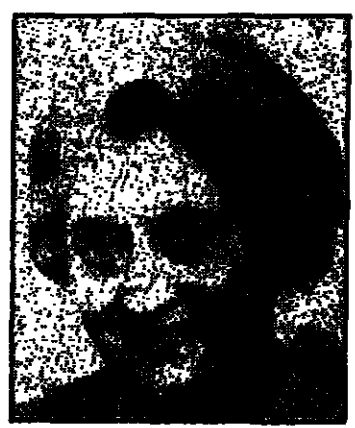
Earlier Monday, parliament rescinded the resolution that allowed the government to suppress the findings.

Copies of the commission's Nov. 19, 1985, interim report and the final version completed three months later were delivered to each of the 525 lawmakers in the Lok Sabha, the Lower House.

The inquiry was conducted by Supreme Court Justice M.P. Thakkar and ran parallel to an investigation by the special investigating team, appointed by the government to bring charges against those involved in Mrs. Gandhi's murder.

After finishing his report in February 1986, Thakkar recommended the report remain secret, fearing its contents might jeopardise other investigations.

Parliament passed a resolution in July 1986 allowing the government to withhold the report in the



Indira Gandhi

interest of national security. Only three people saw the report: Gandhi and two senior cabinet ministers.

But March 14, the Indian Express newspaper published parts of the classified report during questioning and gave unconvincing explanations about entries in his diary, including the name of one of Mrs. Gandhi's assassins.

Seoul mobilizes thousands of riot police to halt protests

SEOUL (AP) — South Korea deployed thousands of riot police in a major show of strength Sunday in Seoul after President Roh Tae-Woo ordered a crackdown on radical groups to end violent anti-government protests.

Riot squads were posted outside important government buildings and at some major intersections. Police officials said the squads had been deployed as part of the crackdown, but declined to say how many officers were involved.

Government prosecutors said they were considering filing charges against a top dissident for

visiting rival communist North Korea without permission. Moon Ik-Hwan arrived in North Korea Saturday for meetings with communist officials.

Roh last week ordered security forces to take tough measures to halt a wave of protests and break up radical organisations he charged were trying to stage a violent revolution. About 700 riot police in 18 buses were posted at the U.S. embassy Sunday as part of the show of strength.

No incidents were reported in Seoul, but radicals clashed with riot police in the southern provincial cities of Kwangju and Chon-

ju, according to Yonhap, the national news agency.

Police battled about 600 protesters who hurled firebombs and rocks in Chonju after they were blocked from marching out of Chonbuk University, Yonhap said. Several hundred students battled police in Kwangju after police blocked them from leaving Chonnam University to support strikers at a shipyard, the report said.

About 1,000 dissidents and radical students took part in a peaceful rally at Korea University in the western part of the city to demand Roh's resignation.

Oscar fever grips Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (R) — Dustin Hoffman and the film "Rain Man" are strong favourites to win Oscars Wednesday at the star-studded Academy Awards presentations.

Hoffman, 51, plays an autistic savant, who can solve mathematical problems but cannot comprehend everyday life, in the film which earned several nominations including best director and best picture.

"I don't feel like a frontrunner. I have a sneaking suspicion this film might not get any Oscars," said Hoffman, who has been nominated six times but won his only Oscar in 1979 for "Kramer Vs. Kramer."

Despite who wins the top awards, Hollywood is rolling out a 1,000-metre red carpet for the

presentations. The show's producer, Allan Carr, says 137 stars are attending — "and we're still counting."

A billion people are expected to see the show throughout the world, including the Soviet Union for the first time, Carr added.

Gene Hackman, who won an Oscar 18 years ago for "The French Connection," is also a strong contender for best actor for his role as a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent probing the deaths of three American civil rights workers in the 1960s in "Mississippi burning."

Max von Sydow, of Sweden, is also in the running for his portrayal of a spineless drunk and loving father in the Danish film "Pelle the Conqueror."

"I think it is wonderful for the academy to nominate a foreigner in a foreign-language film," von Sydow said. "But I certainly don't count on winning an Oscar against all the odds."

Jodie Foster and Glenn Close are favourites for the best actress award.

The deep-voiced Foster, 26, was nominated for her portrayal of a woman who was raped in a bar while bystanders cheered in "The Accused."

Close, who has been nominated five times for her eight films, could win for her interpretation of the domineering and manipulative Marquise de Merteuil in the costumed French drama "Dangerous Liaisons."

Basque rebels extend truce

MADRID (R) — Basque separatist guerrillas extended a ceasefire for three more months Monday, a spokesman for the Basque newspaper Egin said.

He said ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom) sent the newspaper a statement announcing the two-and-a-half-month-old truce would be extended until June 24.

The unprecedented unilateral truce in ETA's violent 21-year campaign for Basque independence had expired at midnight Sunday without any word from the guerrillas.

Security forces had gone on alert as the Spanish government waited to know whether it would be extended.

The spokesman for Egin, the usual channel for ETA's statements, said the latest communication had come early Monday, too late to appear in the day's issue.

The extension of the truce came after several rounds of secret talks in Algiers between ex-

iled ETA leaders and Spanish government envoys.

Earlier Spanish State Radio said ETA's leadership, believed to be hiding in France, was studying and debating reports it received from Algiers. It said both the Madrid government and the Basque regional administration were moderately optimistic that the unilateral truce would be extended.

The group, which has killed some 600 people in its 21-year campaign, wants the talks to cover political demands, including self-determination for the Basque country, a nationalist region of 2.2 million people spanning the Franco-Spanish border.

The Madrid Socialist government, bound by the region's legal statute of autonomy, has publicly rejected political talks and only accepted discussing individual pardons for guerrillas as a dignified way out of their violent campaign.

Dancing to the democracy beat, Nigeria brings politics to the people

By Tunde Obadina
Reuters

ENUGU, Nigeria (R) — Thousands of youths danced, clapped their hands and sang "You be prisoner, if you sell your vote," urged on by Nigerian reggae superstar Majek Fashek.

This was no pop festival but a political rally organised by the government's Social Mobilisation Agency, Mamser, to prepare Nigerians for the re-introduction of politics after a five year ban due to be lifted next month.

"The music is a bait to draw in the youth," the agency's director Jerry Gana told Reuters in Enugu, the 14th stop in a nationwide tour ending in Lagos April 1.

After the lifting of the poli-

tics ban the gloves will be off in a battle between groupings already in the making to try and win registration as one of the two parties which will be allowed to contest local government elections in December.

Next year elected civilians will take over from military governments in the 21 states of the federation, ushering in a delicate two-year period of power-sharing with the military at the centre.

Military President Ibrahim Babangida gave Mamser the role of educating people in responsible democracy, which includes explaining to poor people why they should not sell their vote.

The agency's invariable mes-

sage is that responsibility for ensuring that Nigeria's third attempt at democracy does not fail rests with the electorate.

"We want to break the vicious cycle of bad political leadership by enlightening the electorate on the virtues of using their votes to elect good leaders instead of selling them to unprincipled and directionless leaders," said Gana.

The two previous experiments in democracy ended in military overthrow. Soldiers have been in power for 19 of Nigeria's 29 years of independence.

Mamser wants to transform attitudes in a country that has been beset by indiscipline, corruption and ethnic and religious sectionalism, said Gana. Entertainment at the rallies has drawn crowds so enthusiastic that police have had diffi-

culty keeping control.

But when the reggae and the Afro-rock music was banned from the agenda by disapproving authorities in some of the mainly Muslim northern states, few turned out to hear the political speeches from state governors, agency officials and local dignitaries.

It was an indication of the difficulty the campaign has in penetrating the grass roots.

Many rural and urban dwellers place greater emphasis on their economic survival than on a promised return to civilian government.

"We have not seen them (Mamser) here and don't know what they are supposed to be doing," said 20-year-old farmer, Moses Orji at Ngwo village near Enugu, capital of Anambra state.

"If Mamser can give us a

better life we would be happy," he said.

"We want our stomachs fed first not our minds," said 28-year-old unemployed Sam Onoh.

"I was hoping that they would come and tell us why we are suffering," commented one man, a driver who said he had heard about Mamser over the radio.

Gana agreed that ordinary Nigerians are suffering from the austerities of the government's International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed economic adjustment programme. But he insisted that only a stable government committed to mobilising the country's abundant resources could provide a lasting solution.

Not everyone shares Gana's optimism that Babangida's political transition programme

would lead the country to stability.

Former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo said last month that the planned two-party system would return the country to inter-ethnic and religious wranglings, promoted by politicians whose lust for wealth and power bedevilled past attempts at democracy.

"If we don't watch out this time around the disputes and destruction may start with the registration of parties," he said, launching a book.

The multi-party system is culturally alien to Nigeria, Obasanjo argued, saying only a one-party system could save it from past disunity and instability and provide the basis for meaningful economic development.

"Multi-party bickering is definitely a luxury we cannot

afford."

Obasanjo is too pessimistic. He underestimates the social changes that have been going on in the country and the feelings of the popular forces in the country," said Gana.

"Ethnic parties in a two-party system are completely out of the question because there are so many ethnic groups. We have nine major ethnic groups and numerous others," he said.

Critics of the government's transition programme have said that by limiting political parties to two it contradicts the democratic principles it seeks to establish.

The president of the Nigerian bar association, Alao Aka-Bashorun, this month asked the government to register as many parties as the people wanted.